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The comprehensiveness of Arabic Language

Arabic is a language which is known for its brevity and comprehensiveness. As an example, look at the word given below which means: 'they sought help'. Right away you can see that *three* English words are required to translate this *one* Arabic word. However, there is more to it than meets the eye. This *one* Arabic word conveys *seven* pieces of information to us. Let us see how:

اِسْتَنْصَرُوا

1. نَصَرَ : to help
2. ست : seek
3. The absence of one of the 4 prefixes ا ت ي ن (which makes a future tense verb) plus the *fathah* on ص which renders this word in the past tense.
4. the *fathah* on ص and ت and *kasra* on ا conveys the meaning of active voice ; changing this to a *damma* on ا and ت and a *kasra* ص will change this to a passive voice i.e اُسْتُنْصِرُوا will mean *help was sought from them*
5. و at the end conveys the meaning of masculine gender
6. و at the end conveys the meaning of a group of more than 2 persons
7. و at the end conveys the meaning of third person

The structure of Arabic Language

All 28 alphabets of the Arabic Language are consonants. Unlike English, vowels do not form a part of the Arabic alphabet set. Rather, they are distinct entities called حركات (*harakat*). There are 3 short vowels in Arabic:

1. فتحة (*fatha*) corresponds to English *a*
2. كسرة (*kasra*) corresponds to English *e, i*
3. ضمة (*dhamma*) corresponds to English *o, u*

The term لفظ (*articulation*) refers to all words/sounds produced by the tongue. لفظ can be either موضوع i.e. meaningful, or مُهمَل i.e. meaningless. مُهمَل words can turn in to موضوع

words through the process of coinage. Thus, the word DVD 15 years ago was مُهمَل but is موضوع these days.

موضوع words can be further divided into two categories:

1. مُفْرَد (also called كلمة) is composed of single words
2. مُرَكَّب is composed of more than one word

It is the مُفْرَد which constitutes the parts of speech of the Arabic Language. Unlike English, which has 8

parts of speech, Arabic only has 3 (اِسْم ، فِعْل ، حَرْف). The following table gives a comparison of the

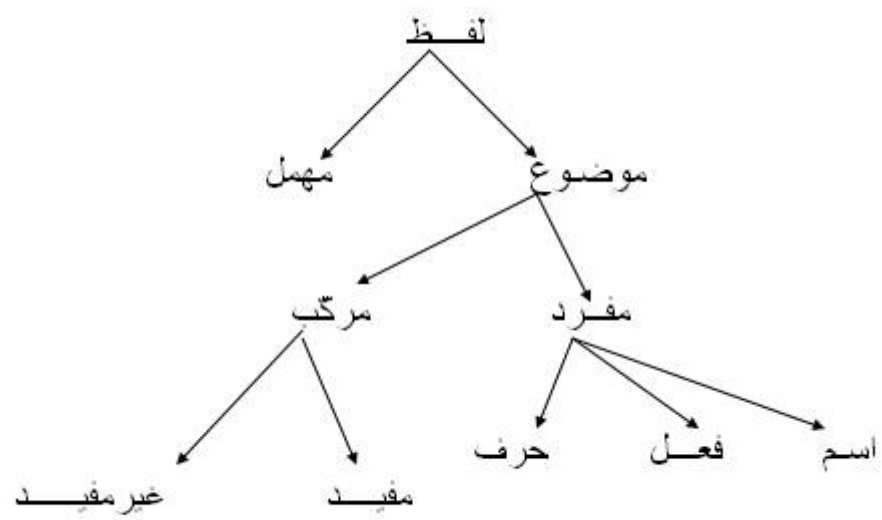
parts of speech between English and Arabic:

English	Arabic	Definition
Noun, Pronoun, Adjective, Adverb	اِسْم	This is the part of speech which indicates upon a meaning in itself and is <i>not</i> linked to time
Verb	فِعْل	This also indicates upon a meaning in itself but is also <i>linked to time</i> (Thus the concept of tenses)
Preposition, Conjunction, Article	حَرْف	Indicates the meaning of something else and does not have a full independent meaning of it's own

The other kind of موضوع word i.e. مُرَكَّب can be further subdivided into

1. مُرَكَّب مفيد, which is also known as a جملة, and contains a Subject/Predicate relationship. This is essentially what we call a *sentence* in English
2. مُرَكَّب غير مفيد is what we call a *phrase* in English. This combination of words conveys an incomplete idea.

Here is a chart of all this information



Nahw - An Introduction to the Science of Arabic Grammar

أَهْمُهَا النَّحْوُ إِذْ لَوْلَاهُ أَصْلُ التَّفَاهُـمِ

The most important of the sciences associated with the Arabic language is **نحو**, for without it no communication can exist :
Ibn-e- Khaldun

نحو is the science of Classical Arabic which describes:

1. How to arrange words to make meaningful sentences
2. How to determine the grammatical structure of a sentence (by determining the positioning of

(حرف ، فعل ، اسم) by change in the last letter of a word

Recall that a sentence in Classical Arabic is defined as a group of words conveying a complete idea and which has a Subject/Predicate relationship. Whenever we want to convey something to our listeners we first form a mental image into our own minds and then describe that image in words to other people.

The '*something*' or the '*primary*' part of the idea is the *Subject* of the sentence and its '*description*' is the *Predicate* of the sentence. The *Subject* is called **مُسْنَدٌ إِلَيْهِ** and the *Predicate* is called **مُسْنَدٌ** in Classical Arabic grammar. In English Language it is fairly easy to differentiate between the Subject and Predicate in a sentence by using the word *is*. As an example, note the sentence '*Amr is standing*'. Here *Amr* is Subject and *standing* describes what is happening with the Subject. As another example note the sentence '*The cat ate the rat*'. Here it is very obvious that the *cat* is the subject and '*ate the rat*' is the predicate, the *rat* being the *object* of *eating* . In English there is a sequence of words which determines which part is the Subject and which is the Predicate. However, in Arabic there is no such

rule that a Subject has to come before the object i.e. there is no sequence rule. At first this might seem a little odd; however, this is what gives the language its flexibility, where using only a few words one can express themselves in variety of ways.

So how do we determine which is Subject and which is Predicate in a sentence? To make this easier, Scholars of **نحو** have divided sentences into two types, based on the first word, and have named the Subject and Predicate in each differently:

1. **جمله اُسْمِيَّة** (Nominal Sentence): This is the kind of sentence which begins with an **إِسْم** e.g. **الْوَلَدُ قَائِمٌ**

(The boy is standing). The Subject, **الْوَلَدُ**, is called **مُبْتَدَأ**, and the predicate, **قَائِمٌ**, is called **خَبَر**

2. **جُمْلَةٌ فِعْلِيَّة** (Verbal Sentence): This is the kind of sentence which begins with a **فعل** e.g. **ذَهَبَ حَامِدٌ**.

Here **ذَهَبَ** is **فعل** and **حَامِدٌ** is **فاعل**

Exactly how we determine which is the Subject and which is the Object will be dealt with once we define the concept of *Grammatical States* in Arabic, where we will make use of all the terms defined above and will see which grammatical state each fits in.

Nahw - The Phrase

In the last post we defined the concept of the Sentence, also called مركب مفيد . Now we define the other part, مركب غير مفيد , or *Phrase*. A *Phrase* is essentially a group of words which does not convey a complete idea e.g. *tall boy*, *intelligent girl* etc. We will start by defining two kinds of phrases:

1. **Noun / Adjective Phrase**: This kind of phrase is made up of two اسم , the first being a noun and the second an adjective. The first اسم is called موصوف and the second is called صفة. Unlike in English, where the adjective precedes the noun, in Arabic the noun will come before the adjective e.g. الولد الطويل (tall boy) or البنت الرشيدة (intelligent girl)

Rules for موصوف / صفة phrase:

- Both موصوف and صفة should agree in *Gender*
- Both موصوف and صفة should agree in *number* e.g. الولدان الطويلان (two tall boys)
- Both موصوف and صفة should agree in definiteness i.e. both should either be definite or indefinite e.g. ولدٌ طويلٌ (a tall boy) or الولد الطويل (tall boy)
- Both موصوف and صفة should be in the same *grammatical state*

2. **Possessive Phrase**: This phrase is also made up of two اسم , which are linked together in a

possessive structure e.g. رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (messenger of Allah). The possessor is termed as مضاف إليه

(here the word اللَّهُ) and the possessed is termed as مضاف (here the word رَسُولُ)

Nahw - The Grammatical States in Arabic Language

The concept of Grammatical States is the cornerstone of نحو . Without the proper understanding of grammatical states you can end up saying *The rat ate the cat* when you actually want to say *The cat ate the rat*. An oft cited example for this is from the Quran:

...وَاذْبِطْ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبَّهُ ...

“And remember when the Lord of Ibrahim tested him...” (Al-Baqarah: 124)

Notice the *fatha* at the end of إِبْرَاهِيمَ and the *dhamma* at the end of رَبَّهُ (...*Ibrahima Rabbuhu*...).

Now if someone was to say the same thing as (...*Ibrahimu Rabbahu*...), that is, switch the *fatha* with the *dhamma*, that would mean “Ibrahim tested his Lord”, which would change the meaning altogether

[Thanks to [Fajr](#) who posted this explanation [here](#)].

In English language we seldom see nouns changing their grammatical structure in sentences no matter whether they are subject, object, or part of possession in a sentence. Take for example the following three sentences in English:

1. *The house fell*
2. *I entered the house*
3. *Door of the house*

Notice the noun **house**: no matter how it occurs in the sentence (Subject in the first, Object in the second, and possessive in the third) its form does *not* change. The word *house* remains *house*. Not so in

Arabic! The word for *house*, البيت, will change *grammatically* (and *not* structurally) when the above

three sentences are rendered in Arabic:

1. البيت سقط (*dhamma* at the end of البيت)
2. دخلت البيت (*fatha* at the end of البيت)

3. باب البيت (*kasra* at the end of البيت)

This is a classic example of change in grammatical state in the Arabic Language. Technically speaking there are 4 grammatical states in Arabic:

1. رفع

2. نصب

3. جر

4. جزم

Let's start with some simple rules:

1. whenever a noun is the subject in a sentence it automatically goes in the *state* of رفع i.e. its last letter will have a *dhamma* on it
2. whenever the noun is the object it goes in the *state* of نصب and its last letter will have a *fatha* on it
3. whenever a noun occurs in a possessive phrase it will automatically go in the *state* of جر i.e. its last letter will have a *kasra* on it
4. the state of جزم is experienced only by the مُضارع (present and future tense) and we will tackle this in a later post, Insha Allah

The name given to this process i.e. reflecting grammatical states on the last letters of words by using

dhamma, fatha, and kasra is إعراب .

You should remember here that an اسم in Arabic Language covers more than simply nouns. It spans the

definition of Adjective, Adverb, Noun, and Pronoun. Therefore, rather than saying that an اسم goes into a certain grammatical state, we will desiccate the اسم into each of these categories and will see in which grammatical state each category falls. For now, let us take another example using three Arabic words: **زيد ، ولد ، ضرب** meaning *Zaid, boy, and hit* when read from left to right. Using these three words and the grammatical states 1-3 noted above we will see how we can convey different ideas. This example also shows the fact that there is no Subject-Object order in Arabic, as there is in English:

1. **ضَرَبَ وَلَدٌ زَيْدٌ** *Zaid hit a boy*

2. **ضَرَبَ وَلَدٌ زَيْدٌ** *A boy hit Zaid*

3. **ضَرَبَ وَلَدُ زَيْدٍ** *Zaid's boy hit...*

Notice how the the nouns *Zaid* and *boy* are being made subject, object, and part of a possessive phrase just by switching from one grammatical state to another. This is, thus, the concept of *Grammatical States* in Arabic. More on this in a later post, Insha Allah!

Nahw - The Grammatical States in Arabic Language - Part 2

In the last post we started discussing the concept of *grammatical states* in the Arabic Language and saw a few examples where an اسم took on these grammatical states. It was also mentioned that the اسم itself can occur in Arabic sentences in the form of more than simply nouns. In fact, an اسم can act like an:

1. Adjective e.g. *The **green** apple*
2. Adverb e.g. *He ran **quickly***
3. Object of Preposition e.g. *in the **house***
4. Adverb of time and place e.g. *I met Amr **yesterday***
5. Adverb of reason and cause e.g. *I stood up **out of respect***

In this post I will introduce quite a few more grammatical terms, all of which form part of Arabic sentences and all of which will be اسم , and then we will see how each of these terms fall into one of the 3 grammatical states. Since there are only 3 grammatical states which an اسم can take but multiple ways in which it can occur in an Arabic sentence therefore رفع نصب ، جر will cover a lot more than just indicating the Subject/Object/Possessive characterization, as we had mentioned in the previous post. In fact, there are 22 positions or grammatical states in an Arabic sentence which an اسم can take. This will entail defining a whole set of new grammatical terms, some of which we have already seen. Let's start from the basics and see how it works.

We had earlier said that there are two kind of sentences in Arabic: جملة اسمية (Nominal Sentence) and جملة فعلية (Verbal Sentence). We can extract 5 separate grammatical terms from these two type of sentences:

1. (مبتداء = Boy , خبر = Standing) i.e. *The boy is standing* e.g. الولدُ قائمٌ . مبتداء : جمله اسميه .

2. (فاعل = Hamid , فعل = Hit) i.e. *Hamid hit* e.g. ضَرَبَ حامِدٌ . جمله فعليه .

مفعول به becomes the object of the verb *hit*, then Ahmad, i.e. *Hamid hit Ahmad* .

3. If we were to change the sentence above to passive voice i.e. *Ahmad was hit*, then the فاعل

(Ahmad) becomes the subject of the sentence. In

such cases it is called نائب فاعل , or the *deputy doer*

In addition to this we have also been introduced to the concept of *phrase* and already know that a possessive phrase consists of two parts:

1. مضاف اليه (The possessor)

2. مضاف (The possessed)

This is now the right time to introduce another term which is frequently encountered in Arabic

sentences, called مجرور . As you may have guessed correctly this is the state when an اسم goes in the

state of جر . In Arabic, whenever an اسم is preceded by a preposition it automatically goes into جر . An

example of this is: البيت (in the house). Note that البيت has entered its grammatical state because of

the preposition في in front of it. There are certain particles in Arabic which cause an اسم to enter a

specific grammatical state. These particles are known as **Governing Agents**. There are 17 of them in

total. However, we will start with only two at this time and will see how the two of them affect the

grammatical state of an اسم. These two particles are:

1. كان

2. إن

Both these governing agents affect جمله اسميه and cancel the original grammatical states of مبتدأ and خبر

.Also, the name of both these terms change as well when a sentence contains either كان or إن

. What was earlier known as مبتدأ is now known as اسمُ كان (Ism of kana) and in case of إن as اسمُ إنَّ

(Ism of Inna). Similarly, the predicates are known as خبرُ كان and خبرُ إنَّ .

So, all in all we have 12 terms at our disposal and the rules of نحو will dictate which grammatical state

each of these terms go in. Firstly, since we are only concerned with اسم at this stage, therefore we will

remove فعل from our list, leaving us with 11 terms to deal with. The following table lists which

grammatical state each falls in:

رفع	فاعل , نائب فاعل , مبتدأ , خبر , اسمُ كان , خبرُ إن
نصب	مفعول به , اسمُ إنَّ , خبرُ كان
جر	مضاف إليه , مجرور

Now this is a *lot* of information! Insha Allah I will give a number of examples in the coming posts for each of these rules so that they become easy to understand.

Nahw - The Anatomy of a Sentence - Part 1

In this post I will give a few examples from القصص النبوي (Qasas-un-Nabiyyeen - Stories of the Prophets) which is the text which we are reading at the [Toronto Shariah Program](#). The purpose here is to see how some of the grammatical terms which we have learned so far fit into an Arabic sentence. This will help in identifying the correct terms and how they can be properly used while constructing longer Arabic sentences. We will also learn a few new grammatical states and will fit each of them in the [table which we built](#) in the previous Nahw post.

كان في قرية رجل مشهور جداً : (In a town there was a very famous man) Note the order of Noun, Adjective, and Adverb here. In English we put Adverb + Adjective + Noun (very + famous + man); in Arabic this order is reversed (man + famous + very). جيد is the adverb here, called the *normal adverb* or مفعول مطلق and it goes into مَصَب therefore you see the two *fathas* at the end. In addition to this قرية is in جر since it is preceded by a preposition, في. Also notice رجل مشهور: they have a صفة، موصوف relationship and thus the following rules apply to them, as explained in [this](#) post:

1. Definiteness: no ال in front of either
2. Plurality: both are singular
3. Gender: both are masculine
4. Grammatical state: both are in رفع (double *dhamma* at the end). Why they are in رفع is because

رجل is the إسم of كان and مشهور has to agree with it in grammatical state because of the صفة، موصوف relationship.

One important thing to note here is that there is *no* rule which says that the

word immediately following **كَانَ** is its subject. We have already stated in a previous [post](#) that

no such rule of sequence exists in Arabic and in this sentence we see that **جُرْجُلٌ** is *not* the word

which immediately follows **كَانَ**

هَذَا الرَّجُلُ اسْمُهُ أَازَرُ (*The name of this man was Azar*) Let's take **أَزَرُ** first: it is in **نَصَبٌ** as can be seen

by the *fatha* at the end. This is because **أَزَرُ** is the **خبر** of **كَانَ** therefore it goes into **نَصَبٌ**. Also, note the

one *dhamma* on **اسْمُهُ** which means that it is in the state of **رَفْعٌ**. This is because it is **إِسْمٌ** of **كَانَ** so it goes

in the state of **رَفْعٌ**. Also, **الرَّجُلُ** is the **مضاف إليه** of **اسْمُهُ** therefore it goes into **جَرٌ** as our [Grammatical State](#)

[Table](#) shows. (Note: the final *kasra* may not show properly on the web page)

وَكَانَ فِي هَذَا الْبَيْتِ اصْنَامٌ (*And in this house there were idols*): **اصْنَامٌ** is the **إِسْمٌ** of **كَانَ** so it is in the state of

نَصَبٌ, thus the double *dhamma* at the end. The whole phrase **فِي هَذَا الْبَيْتِ** is termed to be *in place of* **نَصَبٌ**

. This is necessary since this whole phrase, rather than just a single word, is the **خبر** of **كَانَ**. However,

الْبَيْتِ itself is in **جَرٌ** because of **فِي**, a preposition. This concept of *being in a grammatical* state is

important since most of the time it is a whole phrase which will need to take up a specific grammatical

state rather than a single word. Because we cannot put *dhamma*, *fatha*, or *kasra* on the entire phrase

therefore we consider the whole phrase into that specific grammatical state. This will become more

clear, Insha Allah, when I give more examples involving complex sentences.

وكانَ زَارُ يُعْبُدُ الْأَصْنَامَ (And Azar would worship these idols): The combination of كَانَ and الْمُضَارِع verb

(يُعْبُدُ in this case) gives the meaning of *would*. In other terms, this combination depicts the past continuous tense and is used whenever the idea of a general habit or an action occurring over and over again is to be conveyed. Notice the *fatha* at the end of الْأَصْنَامَ: it is the مفعول به of يُعْبُدُ thus it goes into

نَصَب

I hope that these simple examples would be an easy primer to the application of the concept of Grammatical States in Arabic Language. Insha Allah, I will soon post more example with more complex sentences.

Nahw - The Anatomy of a Sentence - Part 2

As [promised](#) here is the second part of our sentence analysis exercise. In this post, Insha Allah, I will take up a complex Arabic sentence and will show how rules of grammatical states apply to such sentences.

وكان إبراهيم يعرف أن الأصنام حجارة (And Ibrahim would recognize that idols are rock)

Right away you can see that this sentence can be divided into two main parts: **كان** of **إسم**, which is

إبراهيم, and the rest of the sentence, starting from **يعرف**, which is the **خبر** of **كان**. However, within

this **خبر** of **كان** are at least *two* other complete sentences: **ان الأصنام حجارة** (*idols are rock*) and **يعرف**

أن الأصنام حجارة (*he knew that idols are rock*). As a rule, whenever an Arabic sentence is composed of

other smaller sentences (and most of them do!) then the rules of grammatical states apply to the inner sentences and the outer sentence is *assumed* to take the grammatical state which a stand-alone word

would have taken had there been one. To understand this concept fully take the word **إبراهيم**. The

dhamma at its end signifies that it is in the state of **رفع**, which is expected since **كان** of **إسم** goes into the

grammatical state of **رفع**. However, the rest of the sentence which constitutes the **خبر** of **كان** has to go

into **نصب** but how do you put a complete sentence (which itself is composed of two other sentences)

into **نصب**? The answer is that we start analyzing the inner sentences and apply rules of grammatical

states to them individually and the complete outer sentence is *assumed* to be in the state of **نصب**. So let

us do exactly that and in the end we will recombine the inner sentences to complete the whole outer sentence.

before, اِبْرَاهِيْمُ, being the اِسْم of كَان, goes into رَفْع, and hence the *dhamma* at the end.

I hope that this example further explains how the concept of grammatical terms is used in Arabic Language.

Nahw - The Anatomy of a Sentence - Part 3

In this post I will explain , Insha Allah, some points regarding the use of the relative pronoun الَّذِي in the Arabic Language. We will use the following sentence as our example:

كَانَ إِسْمَاعِيلُ وَلَدًا صَغِيرًا يَجْرِي وَيَخْرُجُ مَعَ وَالِدِهِ

(Ismail was a small boy *who* would run and go out with his father)

In English a relative pronoun is used to describe a noun whenever the noun is being described by a full sentence rather than a single word. For example, in the sentence *The pen, which I bought yesterday, is unique*, the word *which* is connecting the pen with its adjective. The analogous word in Arabic is الَّذِي and it gives the meaning of *who*. The technical term for it is اِسْمٌ مُوصُولٌ .

Note that we have translated the sentence given above into English using the word *who* even though there is no الَّذِي in it. To understand this apparent anomaly understand that وَلَدًا is an اِسْمٌ being described by the adjective صَغِيرًا (both of them form a مَوْصُوفٌ and صِفَةٌ relationship, and thus match each other in being *indefinite*). Also, the word وَلَدًا is being described further by the verbal sentence which starts at يَجْرِي and ends at وَالِدِهِ. In effect, the مَوْصُوفٌ has two صِفَةٌ in the main

sentence. Plus, the second **صِفَه** is a complete sentence in itself as opposed to the first one which is a single word. So we have an instance where a noun is being described by a sentence. To be consistent with the **صِفَه - موصوف** rules, whatever is describing **وَلَدًا** has to be *indefinite*. In the Arabic Language, as a rule, all sentences are considered *indefinite* by default. Hence, there is no grammatical problem when connecting **وَلَدًا** with its adjective (i.e. the verbal sentence) since both are indefinite.

Now consider a case where the noun being described is *definite* and we have a sentence which is describing it. This will cause a problem since we need to have a way of converting the *indefinite* sentence into a *definite* sentence before letting it describe a *definite* noun. This functionality is provided by **الَّذِي** which transform the *value* of a sentence from *indefinite* to *definite*. An example of this can be seen in Al-Hashr [22-24]:

هُوَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الظَّهِيبِ وَالشَّهِيدَ قَوْلَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ*

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُتَّقِينَ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ الْحَنَّانُ اللَّهُ عَشِيدٌ رُكُونٌ

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلَّاقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ الْأَلَمُّ سَمِيعٌ عَظِيمٌ سُبْحَٰنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ وَاللَّهُ رُفُّ الْعِزِّ يُلْجِئُ الْحَكِيمُ

Note that the first two verses have **الَّذِي** in it since the noun **اللَّهُ** is being described by **هُوَ** which is a complete sentence. However, this is not the case with the final verse where the noun **اللَّهُ** is being described by **الْخَلَّاقُ** (and other adjectives) which is a *definite* noun (and single word, as well), so **الَّذِي** is not needed here.

I hope this will explain some basic points regarding the use of **الَّذِي** in the Arabic Language.

Nahw - Attached Pronouns: their Grammatical States

A pronoun is a substitute of for a noun. Thus, you can say *This is Zaid's book* or you can say *This is his book*, the *his* being the pronoun. Similarly, you can say *I gave the book to Zaid and Amr* as well as *I gave the book to them*, the *them* being the pronoun here.

In Arabic we can have two forms of a pronoun: *attached* and *detached*. An example of each is:

هُوَ طَالِبٌ *He is a student* (detached pronoun)

ابْنُهُ مُجْتَهِدٌ *His son is hardworking* (attached pronoun)

In this post I will show, Insha Allah, how we can determine the grammatical state of attached pronouns.

There are a total of 14 attached pronouns, same number as the verb conjugations. However, the attached pronouns for 3rd person dual masculine and dual feminine, as well as those for 2nd person dual masculine and dual feminine, are the same. Thus, we are left with $14 - 2 = 12$ attached pronouns to deal with. The table below shows the listings for attached pronouns:

3rd Person Masculine Singular	هُ
3rd Person Masculine dual	هُمَا
3rd Person Masculine Plural	هُمْ
3rd Person Feminine Singular	هَا
3rd Person Feminine dual	هُمَا
3rd Person Feminine Plural	هُنَّ
2nd Person Masculine Singular	كَ
2nd Person Masculine Dual	كُمَا
2nd Person Masculine Plural	كُم
2nd Person Feminine Singular	كِ

2nd Person Feminine Dual	كُـمَا
2nd Person Feminine Plural	كُنَّ
1st Person Masculine/Feminine Singular	نِى
1st Person Masculine/Feminine Dual/Plural	نَا

One point to note about 1st Person Masculine/Feminine Singular: The نِى ending is *only* attached to

verbs. For اسم and حرف (preposition) the ending is a simple ي . I will, Insha Allah, provide an explanation for this shortly.

Grammatical States of attached pronouns:

Why do we need to determine grammatical states for attached pronouns? The answer to this question is that these attached pronouns lack *endings*. For example, we can say زَيْدٌ and right away know that this

is a case of رفع because of the *dhamma* at the end. However, the attached pronouns *cannot* have

dhamma, fatha, or kasra as their endings: كُـمَا will *always* be كُـمَا and نَا will *always* be نَا , for example.

We cannot stick a *dhamma, fatha, or kasra* at their end to reflect grammatical states. Yet, we know that attached pronouns do possess grammatical states, an example of which is ضَرَبْتُهُمْ which means *I hit them*. Clearly, *I*, the pronoun, is the subject here and *them* is the object and thus has to have grammatical states in Arabic. Other examples of the same pronoun in the three grammatical states would be:

1. ضَرَبْنَا (zarab'na): *we hit*. Here نَا is in رفع since it is the subject of hitting
2. ضَرَبَنَا (zarabana): *he hit us*. Here نَا is in نصب since it is the object of hitting
3. مَاضٍ إِلَيْهِنَا (aalihatina): *our gods*. Here نَا is in جر since it is إِلَيْهِ .

Rule for determining Grammatical States of attached pronouns

The pronoun will either be attached to a verb or a non-verb. If it is attached to a verb then it will either be from the endings we learned in **صرف** or it won't. If it is, then **رفع** on the basis of either **فاعل** or **نائب** **مفعول به** (deputy doer). If it isn't, then **نصب** on the basis of **مفعول به**.

If it is attached to an **اسم** then its Grammatical State would be **جر** on the basis of **مضاف إليه**.

If it is attached to **حرف** then it could be attached to either a preposition or one of the **إن** sisters. If it is attached to a preposition then **جر** because of being the object of that preposition. If it is attached to one of the **إن** sisters then its Grammatical State would be **نصب** on the basis of **إسم إن**.

These rules are depicted diagrammatically in the following chart (click to enlarge):



Examples:

Pronoun attached to a verb:

Attached pronoun with the **صرف** table ending: **ضَرَبْنَا** (zarab'na: we hit). Here **نا** is **فاعل** because it is the doer of *hitting*. This is conjugation number 13 from the **صرف** table.

Attached pronoun with ending not from the **صرف** table: **يَذْكُرُهُمْ** (mentioning them). Here **هُمْ** is in **نصب** because it is the **مفعول به** of *mentioning*. The catch here is that the **صرف** tables only talk about *we* and not about *them*; in other words, we do not have a conjugation in the **صرف** tables which translates to anything relating to *them*. Thus, this is an example where we have a pronoun attached to a verb-ending

which cannot be found in the صرف tables.

Pronoun attached to a non-verb:

- Attached to an اسم: e.g. *كِتَابُكَ* (*your book*). This is a possessive phrase so the attached pronoun is in the state of جر
- Attached to a حرف : This can have two instances:
 - Attached to a preposition: e.g. *فِيهِ* (*in it*), *مِنْهُمْ* (*for them*). Here the attached pronoun is in the state of جر because *in* and *it* are the objects of their respective prepositions
 - Attached to an *إن* sister: e.g. *أَنْتُمْ* (*you are*). Here *you* is *إِسْمٌ* *إن*, thus it is in the state of نصب

Note on the use of the *نِى* ending in the 13th conjugation:

In Arabic if we want to say *my book*, we will say *كِتَابِي*; however, if we want to say *I hit*, we will say

ضَرَبْتُ. Notice the extra ن which is used when a verb is used with an attached pronoun in the 13th

conjugation. Recall that اسم can experience grammatical states in Arabic because of governing agents.

For verbs, however, only the مضارع verb experiences grammatical state and that only of جزم : it *cannot*

take the state of رفع or نصب or جر . Yet, the 13th conjugation dictates that the verb takes a *kasra*, since

this conjugation ends in a *ى* . It is to protect the verb from taking the *kasra* (and thus undergoing جر ,

which it cannot) that an extra ن is inserted. This extra ن does *not* have a meaning of its own; it is simply

used as a means of protecting the verb from undergoing a grammatical state which a verb is not allowed to take.

Nahw - The Grammatical States playground: مبني and معرب

Recall from our [earlier](#) discussion that إعراب is the name given to the process of reflecting grammatical states on the last letters of words by using *dhamma*, *fatha*, or *kasra*. To avoid false grammatical assumptions arising from vowel-less script (which is the case both in the writings of Classical Arabic and contemporary Arabic language) it is very important to know which words experience grammatical states in Arabic and which do not. Without this knowledge a reader may attribute grammatical states where they are not supposed to be attributed. In other words, by just looking at a *dhamma* a reader might assume the state of رفع whereas the word may very well be one which does not take any grammatical states.

To go about clearing this confusion the grammarians of Arabic Language have defined certain terms:

1. معرب : These are the parts of speech which do experience grammatical states and show these states by using *dhamma*, *fatha*, and *kasra*
2. True مبني: These are the parts of speech which do not experience any grammatical states
3. Resembling مبني: These are parts of speech which do experience grammatical states but do not show them at their ends for one reason or another

Below, I will explain in detail which part of speech falls under which category.

حرف

كل حرف مستحق للبنا

[Every حرف is worthy of being مبني]

So says the author of *A Thousand Couplets*. From amongst the parts of speech in Arabic, none of the

حرف experience any of the grammatical state. Thus, we cannot say that هُوَ or فِى is in نصب , رفع , or

مبني . It would be grammatically incorrect to say that. In Arabic Language, 100% of the حرف are مبني .

فعل

فعل أمر ومضي بنيا
وأعربوا مضارعا إن عريا
من نون توكيد مباشر ومن
نون إناث كبير عن من فتن

[The Amr verb and past tense are mabnee

And they (The Arabs) considered the imperfect Mu'rab if it is naked

From the attached nun of emphasis and from the nun of femininity

Like they (group of females) scared the one who was put in trial]

Moving on to فعل , we know by now that فعل can be subdivided into 4 broad categories, namely , ماضى ,

فهي , and مضارع , امر .

The فهي conjugations are nothing but a variation of مضارع . If we remove the لا all we are left with is

جزم مضارع in the state of جزم . For example, لا تَشْرَبْ becomes تَشْرَبْ which is a مضارع in the state of جزم .

Also, within the امر everything except the 2nd person active voice is nothing but مضارع in the state of

جزم due to the presence of لام with a kasra at the front. In addition to this, we have already [said](#) that the

2nd person active command of امر has special conjugations, different from those of 1st and 3rd person

active (and also the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person passive voice) since a command is almost always directed

towards a second person. Thus, for the purpose of Nahw we divide the فعل into 3 different different

categories. Note, that we are just shuffling around the same categories of فعل for the purpose of understanding the concept of معرب and مبني; no *new* categories are being defined:

1. ماضى
2. مضارع (including all conjugations except the 2nd person active voice)
3. امر (including only the 2nd person active voice)

In the ensuing discussion, the terms مضارع , ماضى , and امر are used as defined above, and not in the usual صرف terms

Out of these, ماضى is all مبني so no governing agent will ever cause it to enter a grammatical state i.e.

alter its endings. The امر is also 100% مبني. The مضارع, however, is *generally* معرب ; one indication of

this is the change in endings which takes place when we put a لم or a لن in front of a مضارع . Without a لم

the مضارع has a *dhamma* whereas if we put a لن in front of it the ending changes to a *fatha*. Note that

these changes are not received by either the ماضى or the 2nd person active command. In addition to this

recall that the two feminine plurals which, if you [recall](#) , do not change when we add a لم or a لن in front

of the مضارع . For example, تَكَلَّمْنَ remains تَكَلَّمْنَ even if we add a لم or a لن in front of the مضارع . Thus out

of the total 14 conjugations the two feminine plurals are مبني. The other 12 conjugations will change, i.e.

they will be **معرب** provided that the **ن** of emphasis is not there, which, if it is there, will make these conjugations **مبني**. It is important to note that the **ن** of emphasis is a separate word in the emphatic conjugations and cannot receive the change to undergo a grammatical state. Thus, it causes the **مضارع** to be **مبني**. It is now high time to re-read the verses from *A Thousand Couplets* given above for **فعل**

اسم

الاسم منه معرب ومبني
لشبهه من الحروف مدني
كالشبه الوضعي في اسمي جئتنا
والمعنوي في متى وفي هنا

*[The Ism, from it are Murab and Mabnee,
Due to a resemblance to the particles which draws close,
Like the coinage resemblance in the two Isms of جئتنا ,
And the meaning resemblance in the words متى and هنا]*

If one notices, **اسم** and **حرف** are at the two ends of the Arabic Language spectrum: An **اسم** is defined within itself whereas a **حرف** requires additional information to be defined. Moreover, **اسم** are made up of a minimum of 3 letters whereas **حرف** are composed usually of two letters. There are, however, certain **اسم** which resemble **حرف** in that they are also composed of two letters. An example of this happens in **جئتنا** (*you came to us*) which has two **اسم** in it: **تا** (*you*) and **نا** (*us*). Thus, we say that such **اسم** resemble **حرف** on the basis of *coinage* i.e. in the way they are formed, and this resemblance causes the

مبني to get one characteristic of حرف i.e. become اسم.

Another part from the parts of speech is demonstrative pronouns which is closer to حرف on the basis of *meaning*. For example, the word متى could stand for:

1. Interrogation e.g. متى هذا الوعدُ ان كُنتُم صدقين (when will this promise (be fulfilled) if you are from amongst the true)
2. Condition i.e. it conveys the meaning if e.g. when he comes, respect him; when I play, you watch, which essentially can be conveyed in the form: if he comes, respect him or if I play, you watch

In both of these meanings it resembles a حرف which can be explained by the fact that for interrogation in Arabic we already have the particle called the *hamza* of interrogation, أ, and for condition we have the حرف called اِن. Thus on the basis of this *meaning* resemblance the اسم متى becomes مبني .

Lastly, to understand as to why هنا is an example of an اسم which is مبني , consider the how the following meanings are conveyed in Arabic using حرف :

Interrogation - أ

Condition - اِن

Negation - لا ، ما

Prohibition - لا

Emphasis - اِنَّ ن ثَقِيْلَةٌ

Elevation - اَلِ

Longing / Wishing - لِيَت

Anticipation - لَمَّا

Containment - فِي

Destination - اِلِ

Origin / Initiation - مِنْ

Semblance - كَمَا

Reference - ???

Now هُنَا is used for اِشَارَةٌ i.e. *to refer to something*. Every idea being conveyed in the above list has a

corresponding حَرْف in the Arabic Language, except هُنَا . Thus, the Arabic grammarians say: فَحَقُّهُ اَنْ

اِشَارَةٌ (So, it was also worthy of having a particle coined alongside it). In other words, اِشَارَةٌ

should also have a حَرْف coined for it and yet there is none. Thus, هُنَا is an اِسْم which is مَبْنِي due to the

resemblance to a حَرْف which should have existed but doesn't.

This shows , at least, that there are certain categories of اِسْم which are مَبْنِي due to one reason or another:

meaning, resemblance, dependancy etc. Below, I list these categories:

1. Personal Pronouns: *He, him, she, they, I, we* etc.
2. Interrogative Pronouns: من, ما, متى, أين (*Who, what, when, where*)
3. Relative Pronouns: الذى, التى (*Who, what, which*)
4. Demonstrative Pronouns: هنا, هنالك, هنا (*this, here*)

Finally, we are ready to put all this information together in the following 3 points:

1. مبني All :حروف
2. 80 % of أفعال are مبني and 20% are معرب
3. 80% of أسماء are معرب and 20% are مبني

اِسْم - Methods of reflection of an

Up until now we have learned that an اِسْم which is مُعْرَب will show its grammatical states using a ضَمَّة for رَفْع, a فَتْحَة for نَصَب, or a كَسْرَة for جَر (or the corresponding تَنْوِين). However, there are situations in Arabic Language where it is not possible to show the grammatical states using either of these three methods. As an example take a look at :

1. جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ *Musa came*
2. رَأَيْتُ مُوسَىٰ *I saw Musa*
3. مَرَرْتُ بِمُوسَىٰ *I passed by Musa*

In the first sentence مُوسَىٰ is the subject (i.e. in the state of رَفْع), in the second it is the object (i.e. the state of نَصَب), and in the third it is in the state of جَر because of the حَرْفِ , i.e. بِ , in front of it. Yet, in none of the examples the grammatical states are shown using the usual signs of a ضَمَّة, or a فَتْحَة, or a كَسْرَة. This is because the noun مُوسَىٰ is incapable of showing these signs. This leads us to the fact that variations can occur in the way grammatical states are reflected on an اِسْم. For our purposes we will divide اِسْم in 16 different categories and will see how each category will show its grammatical state in its own unique way. These 16 categories and their corresponding methods of reflection are listed in the table below and each category is then further explained in detail with examples. You can also click on any category to jump to its explanation:

#	Type of اسم	رفع	نصب	جر
1	<u>مُفْرَدٌ مُنْصَرَفٌ صَحِيحٌ</u>	ضَمَّةٌ	فَتْحَةٌ	كَسْرَةٌ
2	<u>مُفْرَدٌ قَائِمٌ مَقَامٌ صَحِيحٌ</u>	ضَمَّةٌ	فَتْحَةٌ	كَسْرَةٌ
3	<u>جَمْعٌ مُكْسَرٌ مُنْصَرَفٌ</u>	ضَمَّةٌ	فَتْحَةٌ	كَسْرَةٌ
4	<u>جَمْعٌ مُؤَنَّثٌ سَالِمٌ</u>	ضَمَّةٌ	كَسْرَةٌ	كَسْرَةٌ
5	<u>غَيْرٌ مُنْصَرَفٌ</u>	ضَمَّةٌ	فَتْحَةٌ	فَتْحَةٌ
6	<u>6 Special Nouns</u>	و	ا	ى
7	<u>الْمُثَنَّى</u>	ا	ى	ى
8	<u>كِلَا وَكِلْتَا</u>	ا	ى	ى
9	<u>اِثْنَانِ وَاثْنَتَانِ</u>	ا	ى	ى
10	<u>جَمْعٌ مُذَكَّرٌ سَالِمٌ</u>	و	ى	ى
11	<u>All exceptions which do not fall in under the definition of جَمْعٌ but are reflected in the same manner</u>	و	ى	ى
12	<u>عِشْرُونَ to تِسْعُونَ i.e. multiple of 10 up to 90</u>	و	ى	ى
13	<u>اسْمٌ مَقْصُورٌ</u>	Assumed	Assumed	Assumed
14	<u>Any اسم other than جَمْعٌ مُذَكَّرٌ سَالِمٌ which is مضاف towards</u>	Assumed	Assumed	Assumed
15	<u>اسْمٌ مَنْقُوصٌ</u>	Assumed	Explicit	Assumed
16	<u>جَمْعٌ مُذَكَّرٌ سَالِمٌ which is مضاف towards</u>	Assumed و	Explicit ى	Explicit ى

Category 1: (مُفْرَدٌ مُنْصَرَفٌ صَحِيحٌ) This category can be titled in English as *Singular-Fully*

Declinable - No Weak Letters. This is the category which we had discussed [earlier](#) as the one which shows its grammatical states in the usual manner. Examples:

- جَاءَ زَيْدٌ* (Zaid came)
- رَأَيْتُ زَيْدًا* (I saw Zaid)
- مَرَرْتُ بِزَيْدٍ* (I passed by Zaid)

Category 2: (مُفْرَد قَائِم مَقَام صَحِيح) This category consists of any اِسْم which ends in a و or ي

preceded by a سُكُون, e.g. دَلْوٌ* (a bucket) or ظَبْيٌ* (a deer). Examples:

- جَاءَ ظَبْيٌ* (a deer came)
- رَأَيْتُ ظَبْيًا* (I saw a deer)
- مَرَرْتُ بِظَبْيٍ* (I passed by a deer)

Category 3: (جَمْع مُكْسَر مُنْصَرَف) or the Fully Declinable Broken Plural. As the name

implies, this category consists of the declinable broken plural. Examples:

- جَاءَ رِجَالٌ* (A man came)
- رَأَيْتُ رِجَالًا* (I saw a man)
- مَرَرْتُ بِرِجَالٍ* (I passed by a man)

Category 4: (جَمْع مُوَنْث سَالِم) or The Sound Feminine Plural. This has already been taken care

of [here](#). I will repeat the examples, though:

- جَاءَتِ الْمُسْلِمَاتُ* (The Muslim women came)

- رَأَيْتُ الْمُسْلِمَاتِ (I saw the Muslim women)
- مَرَرْتُ بِالْمُسْلِمَاتِ (I passed by the Muslim women)

Category 5: (غَيْرُ مُنْصَرَفٍ). This is an اِسْم which contains either 2 of the 9 causes of change-restriction or 1 powerful cause which stands in the place of 2 causes. Some of the salient points regarding this category are:

- This category never gets a تَنْوِين or a كَسْرَةٌ
- All feminine names fall into this category
- Most masculine names are not in this category, except those ending in a ة
- Names rhyming with اَفْعَلْ fall in this category
- Adjectives rhyming with اَفْعَلْ (e.g. the colors) fall in this category

Below, I list the 9 reasons, the presence of which (either two reasons or one powerful one) can cause an اِسْم to become غَيْرُ مُنْصَرَفٍ:

1. Transgression: A word leaves its original pattern and adopts a new one because of excessive usage. An example of this is the name عُمَر which used to be عَامِر but left its pattern to become عُمَر
2. Be an adjective: This is a property which needs to exist within the medium of a body and cannot exist without it. Thus, this has to be a quality like *beautiful* or *lazy*. Examples will include colors like اَحْمَر (red) or اَسْوَد (black)

3. Be feminine: The following four reasons cause an اسم to be feminine:

- if there is a ة at the end. Note that even though طَلْحَة is a man's name, yet the word is

feminine since it has a ة at its end

4. if there is an اَلِف مَقْصُورَة i.e. final اَلِف not followed by a ء , for example: حُبْلَى

(pregnant) or كُبْرَى (the small one). This is a powerful reason so it alone will cause an اسم to

become غَيْر مُنْصَرَف

5. if there is an اَلِف مَمْدُودَة i.e. final اَلِف followed by a ء , for example: عُلَمَاء (men of

knowledge) or بَيْضَاء (the white one). This is a powerful reason so it alone will cause an اسم

to become غَيْر مُنْصَرَف

6. if it is an understood feminine for example, زَيْنَب , which is the name of a girl

7. Be a name

8. Be plural

9. Be of foreign origin like اِبْرَاهِيم or اِسْحَاق or يَعْقُوب

10. Be compound (two words linking together to become a name) like حَضْرَمَوْت , which is a

place in Yemen, or سَبْوِيَه who was an Arabic grammarian

11. Be on the pattern of a verb. For example, اَكْبَر or اَحْمَد , both of which are on the pattern

of اَفْعَل

12.Extra ا and ن at the end. Examples are عُثْمَان or نُعْمَان. Thus, in *Hadith* literature we

will see عَنْ عُثْمَانَ ابْنِ with a فَتْحَة on عُثْمَان although there is a preposition, عَنْ

, in front of it

Category 6: This category is composed of 6 special nouns

1. أَبٌ* (a father)
2. أَخٌ* (a brother)
3. حَمٌ* (a father-in-law)
4. فَمٌ* (a mouth)
5. هَنْ* (a thing)
6. ذُو* (a possessor). This is always followed by a noun

These will show their grammatical states according to type 6 under the conditions that they have to be singular (dual will be dealt with in category 7 and plural has already been dealt with in category 3) and they cannot be مضاف towards ي (which case will be dealt with in category 16).

Some examples are: ذَهَبَ أَخُو مَاجِدٍ (Majid's brother went) or رَأَيْتُ أَخَا مَاجِدٍ (I saw

Majid's brother) or ذَهَبْتُ مَعَ أَخِي مَاجِدٍ (I went with Majid's brother). Examples using ذُو

would be: جَاءَ ذُو مَالٍ (a possessor of wealth came) or رَأَيْتُ ذَا مَالٍ (I saw a possessor of wealth)

or مَرَرْتُ بِذِي مَالٍ (*I passed by a possessor of wealth*) or وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ (*above every possessor of knowledge is the All Knowing*)

Category 7: This deals with الْمُثْنَتَيْنِ or the *dual*. This is an اِسْم to the end of which is attached either an ا and a ن or a ي and a ن to indicate that *with it is another like it*. An example would be كَتَبَ الرَّجُلَانِ مَكْتُوبَيْنِ إِلَى الْمَرْأَتَيْنِ (*the two men wrote two letters to the two women*)

There are some other words in the Arabic Language which are treated like duals e.g. أَبَوَانِ meaning *father and mother* or قَمَرَانِ meaning *moon and sun* (and **not** two fathers or two moons) which follow the same method of reflection as this category

Category 8: This includes two words كِلَا and كِلْتَا meaning *both* (masculine and feminine, respectively). Examples are : جَاءَ رَجُلَانِ كِلَاهُمَا (*both men came*) or رَأَيْتُ رَجُلَيْنِ كِلَيْهِمَا (*I saw both men*) or مَرَرْتُ بِرَجُلَيْنِ كِلَيْهِمَا (*I passed by both men*)

Category 9: This includes اِثْنَانِ and اِثْنَتَانِ which means *two* (masculine and feminine, respectively). For example: جَاءَ اِثْنَانِ (*two [masculine objects] came*) or رَأَيْتُ اِثْنَيْنِ (*I saw two [masculine objects]*) or مَرَرْتُ بِاِثْنَيْنِ (*I passed by two [masculine objects]*)

Category 10: *The Sound Masculine Plural* or جَمْعٌ مُذَكَّرٌ سَالِمٌ has already been dealt with [here](#). I will give the usual examples, though: جَاءَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ (*The Muslim men came*) or رَأَيْتُ

مَرَرْتُ بِالْمُسْلِمِينَ (I passed by the Muslim men) or أَلِفُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (I saw the Muslim men)

Category 11: This category consists of those اِسْم which are reflected the same way as Category 10 but

do not fall under the اِسْم category. Examples of such اِسْم are اُولُو and its sisters.

The reflection of this category is shown by the following examples: هُمْ اُولُو الْاَلْبَابِ (They are

people of intelligence) or رَأَيْتُ اُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ عِنْدَ اُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ (I saw the people of

intelligence by the people of intelligence). Other words which fall in this category are اَهْلُ (people of)

and عَلِيَّينَ (the highest places)

Category 12: This category constitutes multiples of 10 starting from 20 and going up to 90 (عِشْرُونَ

تِسْعُونَ) and are reflected using the same method as Category 10 and 11. Examples: جَاءَ

مَرَرْتُ رَأَيْتُ عِشْرِينَ رَجُلًا (I saw twenty men) or عِشْرُونَ رَجُلًا (twenty men came)

بِعِشْرِينَ رَجُلًا (I passed by twenty men)

Category 13: This category consists of اِسْم of the form اِسْم or اِسْم i.e. an اِسْم having an اَلِف

مَقْصُورَةً at its end. Such اِسْم are incapable of showing any اِعْرَاب and thus they are categorized

as having assumed reflection. Examples are:

جَاءَ مُوسَى (Musa came) or رَأَيْتُ مُوسَى (I saw Musa) or مَرَرْتُ بِمُوسَى (I passed by Musa).

Another set of examples would be: جَاءَ عَصَا (a staff came) or رَأَيْتُ عَصَا (I saw a staff) or

مَرَرْتُ بِعَصَاً (I passed by a staff)

Category 14: This category consists of اسم other than مذكر سألِم i.e. sound masculine plural, which is مضاف towards ي of first person, for example, غُلَامِي (my servant) or بَيْتِي (my house). Examples in this categories will be: جاءَ غُلَامِي (my servant came) or رَأَيْتُ غُلَامِي (I saw my servant) or مَرَرْتُ بِغُلَامِي (I passed by my servant)

Category 15: This category consists of اسم which are called منقوص i.e. they have a ي preceded by a كسرة at their end. Only the state of نصب is reflected on them; the other two are assumed. Examples are: جاءَ الْقَاضِي (The Judge came) or رَأَيْتُ الْقَاضِي (I saw the Judge) or مَرَرْتُ بِالْقَاضِي (I passed by the Judge)

Category 16: This category consists of اسم which are جمع مذكر سألِم and are مضاف towards ي of first person. An example would be مُسْلِمِي (my muslims). For the رفع case this was originally مُسْلِمُو but the و becomes سَاكِن since it is appearing with a ي. In the second step the و is changed to a ي giving us مُسْلِمِي and the ضمة is changed to كسرة (for pronunciation reasons) to give us مُسْلِمِي. However, the originals for the نصب and جر case were already مُسْلِمِي. The set of examples in this category, then, would be: جاءَ مُسْلِمِي (my Muslims

came) or رَأَيْتُ مُسْلِمِيَّ (I saw my Muslims) or مَرَرْتُ بِمُسْلِمِيَّ (I passed by my Muslims)

I hope this detailed introduction to methods of reflection for an اِسْم will go a long way towards understanding this key concept in Arabic Language, Insha Allah.

Nahw - Methods of reflection for the مُضارع verb

We have [already learned](#) that an اِسْم can have three grammatical states which will determine whether it is the subject or object in a sentence or whether it exists in a possessive structure. At that time we had also learned that the verb also experiences three grammatical states, the first two being رفع and نصب and the third one being جَزَم. Also, we [know](#) that it is only the مُضارع which experiences these states, the ماضى being مَبْنى on either فَتْحَة or سُكُون or ضَمَّة

Note the following for امر and ماضى :

- 3rd conjugation of ماضى is مَبْنى on ضَمَّة ; the 4 ماضى conjugations (1,2,4, and 5) are مَبْنى on فَتْحَة; and the rest are مَبْنى on سُكُون
- جَزَم is مَبْنى on the sign of امر
 - For singular conjugations this sign is سُكُون e.g. اِفْعَلْ (You do!)
 - For dual conjugations this sign is denoted by the omission of ن e.g. اِفْعَلَا (You [two males] do!)

It is interesting to note that a verb can never become subject or object in a sentence; it describes the actions being done by or upon an اِسْم but never does an action itself and is never acted upon. Thus, the

concept of grammatical states for a verb is quite different from that for an **اسم**. In this post, Insha Allah, I will try to explain what exactly is meant by the grammatical states of a verb and how this concept is useful in the Arabic Language.

As with **اسم**, the goal of having grammatical states for verbs is to remove confusion, but in a different sense. For **اسم** confusion will occur if do not know which one is subject and which one is object and the process of **إعراب** is used to remove this confusion. For a verb the change in grammatical state will change the *description* of the action: in one state the action may be negated and restricted to future tense (as is the case with **لن**); in another state the action will be negated and also rendered to the past tense (as is the case with **لم**). Also, there is the case where the grammatical states will determine which actions are allowed and which are not in sentences where two or more verbs come one after the other. In such a situation, grammatical state of a verb may turn the final meaning of the sentence into one depicting :

- **نَهَى** from doing both actions
- **نَهَى** from doing first action only
- **نَهَى** from gathering both actions wherein doing each action separately is permissible

As an example of this, consider the following sentence:

لَا تَشْرَبِ الْبَنَ وَتَأْكُلِ السَّمَكَ (*Don't drink milk and don't eat fish*)

The first and second verbs are both in the state of **جَزَمَ** because of **لَا** and this sentence is an example of one which gives the *not doing both* meaning i.e. *Don't ever drink milk and eat fish.*

However, look at the same sentence with a slight variation:

لَا تَشْرَبِ الْبَنَ وَتَأْكُلِ السَّمَكَ (Don't drink milk while eating fish).

Notice the change of إعراب on تَأْكُلِ: The first verb, تَشْرَبِ, is still in the state of جَزَمَ ,

whereas the second verb, تَأْكُلِ, is now in the state of نصب , and the meaning changes entirely in this case. The following table details out the different combinations for the scenario where two verbs occur in the same sentence:

Grammatical state of first verb	Grammatical state of second verb	Meaning
جَزَمَ	جَزَمَ	Prohibition from both actions i.e. don't do either
جَزَمَ	رفع	Prohibition from first action but permission for second action
جَزَمَ	نصب	Prohibition from first action <i>while</i> the second action is being done

After having established the importance of grammatical states for the مُضارع verb we will now go into more details and see how each grammatical state is reflected on different conjugations.

Out of the 14 conjugations for the مُضارع , the two feminine plurals are not considered since these are

مَبْنِي : their ending is نَ (i.e. نَ with a فَتْحَة) which is a pronoun and it never changes e.g.

لَنْ يَفْعَلْنَ or لَمْ يَفْعَلْنَ or يَفْعَلْنَ

The rest of the 12, which are معرب, are broken up into:

- Group of 5 verbs which look the same and all are singulars except one (conjugations 1, 4,7,13, and 14). These 5 could have:
 - regular last letter e.g. يَنْصُرُ or يَضْرِبُ , in which case the verb is called مُفْرَد

- ناقِصٌ واوى as last letter e.g. يَدْعُوْ , in which case it is called ناقِصٌ واوى
- ناقِصٌ ياي as last letter e.g. يَرْمِيْ , in which case it is called ناقِصٌ ياي
- ناقِصٌ النفى as last letter e.g. يَرْضَىْ , in which case it is called ناقِصٌ النفى
- Group of 7 which have a ن at its end (the 4 duals and conjugations 3, 9, and 10)
 - يَفْعَلَانِ
 - يَفْعَلُونِ
 - تَفْعَلَانِ , which occurs 3 times
 - تَفْعَلَيْنِ
 - تَفْعَلُونِ

The following table details out the method of reflection for these categories:

Type of Verb	رفع	نصب	جَزَمَ
مُفْرَدٌ صَحِيحٌ	ضَمَّةٌ	فَتْحَةٌ	سُكُونٌ
ناقِصٌ ياي or ناقِصٌ واوى	Assumed ضَمَّةٌ	Real فَتْحَةٌ	Drop of لام position
ناقِصٌ النفى	Assumed ضَمَّةٌ	Assumed فَتْحَةٌ	Drop of لام position
Group of 7	Presence of ن	Omission of ن	Omission of ن

Examples of مُفْرَدٌ صَحِيحٌ :

1. رَفَعٌ يَنْصُرُ (he helps) for رفع
2. نَصَبٌ لَنْ يَنْصُرَ (he will never help) for نصب

جَزَمَ (he did not help) for لَمْ يَنْصُرْ 3.

Examples of ناقصٌ واوى or ناقصٌ ياي :

ضَمَّةٌ - رفع (he fights and he throws) يَغْزُو وَ يَرْمِي

فَتْحَةٌ - نصب (he will never fight and never throw) لَنْ يَغْزُو وَ يَرْمِي

Drop of لام position - جَزَمَ (he did not fight and he did not throw) لَمْ يَغْزُو وَ لَمْ يَرْمِ

Examples of ناقصٌ النفى :

ضَمَّةٌ - رفع (Assumed) يَرْضَى

فَتْحَةٌ - نصب (Assumed) لَنْ يَرْضَى

Drop of لام position - جَزَمَ (Drop of لام position) لَمْ يَرْضَ

Examples of Group of 7 with ن:

(Presence of ن) - رفع يَفْعَلُونَ , يَفْعَلَانِ , تَفْعَلِينَ

(Omission of ن) - نصب لَنْ تَفْعَلَا (you will never do)

(Omission of ن) - جَزَمَ (you did not do) لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا

Hopefully this brief introduction to the grammatical states of verbs in the Arabic Language will be sufficient for the students of Nahw, Insha Allah.

Nahw - حروف مشبهه بالفعل - Particles resembling Verbs

In this post I will, Insha Allah, try to explain how some حُرُوف (particles) in the Arabic Language, namely إِنَّ and its sisters, resemble verbs and form a category of their own, in the same way as حُرُوف جر (prepositions) do. There are 6 such particles and they are called حُرُوف مُشَبَّهَةٌ بِالْفِعْلِ. They enter upon a جُمْلَةٌ اسْمِيَّةٌ causing the مُبْتَدَأ to become مَنْصُوب i.e. go into the state of نَصَب. The name of the مُبْتَدَأ changes to اِسْمٌ إِنَّ and the خَبَر becomes خَبَرٌ إِنَّ which goes in state of رَفْع e.g. إِنَّ الْكِتَابَ جَدِيدٌ (*Indeed the book is new*). There are three reasons why these particles resemble verbs:

1. Resemblance in rhyming
2. Resemblance in meaning
3. Resemblance in the way these particles affect the subject and predicate of a sentence

The table below lists all 6 members of this group:

حرف	Meaning
إِنَّ	<i>Indeed</i>
أَنَّ	<i>The fact that or that</i>
كَأَنَّ	<i>As if</i>
لَكِنَّ	<i>But or however</i>
لَعَلَّ	<i>Perhaps</i>

لَيْتَ	Would that
--------	------------

and the following table give the corresponding rhyming verbs for these حُرُوفُ

حرف	Rhyming Verb
إِنَّ	فَرَّ
أَنَّ	فَرَّ
كَأَنَّ	قَطَعَ
لَكِنَّ	قَاتَلْنَا
لَعَلَّ	قَطَعَ
لَيْتَ	لَيْسَ

Now we will see how these particles also carry verb-like meanings. As an example take إِنَّ , which means *indeed* . In a sentence *indeed* can be substituted by the phrase *I verify* for which the word is

أَنَّ , showing us that the meaning of *verifying* is hidden inside إِنَّ . The same also goes for أَنَّ .

Now, كَأَنَّ means *as if* which means you are *likening or comparing one thing to another* for which the word is شَبَّهْتُ . Similarly, لَكِنَّ contains the meaning of *I rectify* which can be seen by the fact that a statement which has to be rectified/corrected must include *but* e.g. *Zaid came but Amr never came*.

The word for rectification is اسْتَدْرَكَتُ . Moving forward, we see that لَعَلَّ means *I hope* or *I anticipate* for which the word is تَرَجَّعْتُ . Finally, لَيْتَ carries the meaning of *wishing and longing* for which the word is تَمَنَّيْتُ (*I wish*).

Finally, the way these particles affect parts of a sentence shows us that they can act as governing agents

just like verbs do. To see this in more detail note that most verbs are followed by two اِسْم : one of them would be in the state of رَفْع on the basis of فاعِل and the other will be in the state of نَصَب on the basis of مفعول به . Now, these 6 particles are also followed by two اِسْم , one of which is in the state of نَصَب based on being the subject of the particle and the other one is in the state of رَفْع based on the predicate. Thus, this is another way these particles act in a similar manner to that of verbs.

Nahw - Singular, Dual, and Plural Nouns in Arabic

Arabic nouns can either be singular (المُفْرَد), dual (المُثَنِّي), or plural (الْجَمْعُ). This is depicted diagrammatically in the following chart (click to enlarge), with further subdivisions for the plural noun.



The Dual:

The dual can be constructed depending upon its grammatical state. Thus, the rule for constructing dual in رفع are different than the rules for constructing the dual in either نصب or جر . Below, we analyze these rules for constructing the dual of a noun in Arabic.

- When the noun is in رفع the dual is constructed by adding the letters ن and ا

e.g. جاءَ الطَّالِبَانِ (The two students came) . In this structure the ا is basically the sign of

كَسْرَة whereas the final ن and the corresponding ضَمَّة do not have a grammatical significance

- When the noun is in either نصب or جر , the dual is formed by adding a يَنْ to the singular e.g.

رَأَيْتُ الطَّالِبَيْنِ (I saw the two students) or مَرَرْتُ بِالطَّالِبَيْنِ (I passed by the two

students). In this case, the ي indicates both فَتْحَة and كَسْرَة and, as before, the final ن and

the corresponding كَسْرَة do not have a grammatical significance

Note on the use of Dual:

- If the verb precedes the فاعِل the verb must be singular, e.g. ذَهَبَ الْوَلَدَانِ (*The two boys went*)
- If the فاعِل precedes the verb then the verb should also be dual, e.g. الْوَلَدَانِ ذَهَبَا

The Plural:

As can be seen from the above diagram, there are two types of plurals in Arabic:

- الْجَمْعُ السَّالِم or the *Sound Plural*
- الْجَمْعُ الْمَكْسَر or the *Broken Plural*

The first category can further be divided into masculine or feminine genders.

The Sound Plural: This is formed from the singular by suffixing additional letters to it while retaining the original letters from the singular noun; thus the name *Sound Plural*. Below, we analyze rule for constructing the Sound Plurals.

Sound Masculine Plural:

- When the noun is in رفع the plural is constructed by adding the letters و and ن, with the ن having a فَتْحَة on it. In this structure the و is basically the sign of ضَمَّة whereas the final ن and the corresponding فَتْحَة do not have a grammatical significance. For example, جاءَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ (*The Muslim men came*)
- When the noun is in either نصب or جر , the plural is formed by adding اَ يَنْ , preceded by a letter with a *kasra*, to the singular. For example, رَأَيْتُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (*I saw the Muslim men*)

or مَرَرْتُ بِالْمُسْلِمِينَ (I passed by the Muslim men)

Sound Feminine Plural:

- When the noun is in رفع the plural is constructed by adding the letters ت and ا to the singular, with a ضَمَّة on the ت . For example, جَاءَتِ الْمُسْلِمَاتُ (The Muslim women came)
- When the noun is in either نصب or جر the plural is formed by adding the letters ت and ا to the singular, with a كَسْرَة on the ت in both the cases. For example, رَأَيْتِ الْمُسْلِمَاتِ (I saw the Muslim women) or مَرَرْتُ بِالْمُسْلِمَاتِ (I passed by the Muslim women)

The Broken Plural:

This is called *broken* because it does not retain the structure of the singular noun i.e. it is formed by breaking up the singular noun. Thus, in this type of plural the singular is altered by changing its vowel or altering its letters. This is analogous to the English where we say *Man-Men*, *Mouse-Mice*, or *Sheep-Sheep*.

The broken plural in Arabic is based on different patterns and there is no one rule which governs the formation of the broken plural. These are best learned by exposure. Below, I list some of these patterns

اوزان

الوزن	Singular	Plural	Meaning
أَفْعُلْ	نَفْسٌ	أَنْفُسٌ	Self - Selves
أَفْعَالٌ	نَهْرٌ	أَنْهَارٌ	River - Rivers
أَفْعِلَة	سُؤَالٌ	أَسْئِلَة	Question - Questions
فَعْلٌ	كِتَابٌ	كُتُبٌ	Book - Books
فَعُولٌ	قَلْبٌ	قُلُوبٌ	Heart - Hearts

جِبَالٌ	جَبَلٌ	فِعَالٌ	Mountain - Mountains
أَنْبِيَاءُ	نَبِيٌّ	أَفْعِلَاءُ	Messenger - Messengers
غِلْمَانٌ	غُلَامٌ	فِعْلَانٌ	Boy - Boys
حُفَّازٌ	حَافِظٌ	فُعَالٌ	Keeper -Keepers
فُقَرَاءُ	فَقِيرٌ	فُعَلَاءُ	Beggar - Beggars
أَنْمَالٌ	أَنْمَلَةٌ	أَفَاعِلٌ	Fingertip - Fingertips
أَبَارِيْقٌ	إِبْرِيْقٌ	أَفَاعِلٌ	Beaker-Beakers
مَسَاجِدٌ	مَسْجِدٌ	مَفَاعِلٌ	Mosque - Mosques
مَفَاتِيْحٌ	مِفْتَاحٌ	مَفَاعِلٌ	Key - Keys

I hope this introduction to the Singular-Dual-Plural system in Arabic will be a good starting point for anyone trying to master this subject.

Nahw - Let us count in Arabic - and get a headache!

Remember your kindergarten class and learning to count: One, Two, Three. Easy, wasn't it? Not the case in Arabic counting system . Before I even try to begin explaining the numbers and counting system in Arabic I would like to come up with a short disclaimer: if you get a headache after reading this post please do not leave inflammatory messages on my blog. I am but a poor student trying to learn counting in Arabic .

Well, jokes aside, the Numbers in Arabic systems have complex rules regarding their usage and can be learned only if one memorizes these rules. Most of the stuff for this post will come from Alan Jones' book [Arabic Through the Quran](#) with notes from the [Toronto Shariah Program](#) class, of course. I will try to make it as easy as possible, Insha Allah, to learn the numbering system in the Arabic Language.

In English we say *I saw three boys* or *I saw three girls*. Notice how *three* remains the same in both the structures. In Arabic, however, the gender is *also* associated with numbers (with some exceptions), thus

we say ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ (Three days) and تِسْعَ آيَاتٍ (Seven verses) where we use the masculine form

of the number in the first example and the feminine in the second. To make things more complicated,

we also have to consider which grammatical state each part of the number goes in.

Let us try to make some sense out of this. We start our discussion by listing the counting in Arabic.

Number	with Masculine Noun	with Feminine Noun
One	أَحَدٌ	إِحْدَى
Two	اِثْنَانِ	اِثْنَتَانِ
Three	ثَلَاثَةٌ	ثَلَاثٌ
Four	أَرْبَعَةٌ	أَرْبَعٌ
Five	خَمْسَةٌ	خَمْسٌ
Six	سِتَّةٌ	سِتٌّ

Seven	سَبْعَةٌ	سَبْعٍ
Eight	ثَمَانِيَةٌ	ثَمَانٍ
Nine	تِسْعَةٌ	تِسْعٍ
Ten	عَشْرَةٌ	عَشْرٍ
Eleven	أَحَدَ عَشَرَ	إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ
Twelve	اثْنَا عَشَرَ	اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ
Thirteen	ثَلَاثَةَ عَشَرَ	ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ

Since 1 and 2 are straightforward to handle we start at number 3 and divide the numbers in ranges for easier handling

3-10 : From 3 until 10 the gender of the number will be opposite to what is being counted (i.e. the

noun). Also, the noun being counted will be in the state of جر. Examples: سَبْعُ سَمَوَاتٍ (*seven*

heavens) or أَرْبَعَةُ شُهَدَاءَ (*four witnesses*)

11 : The noun and number will both match in gender and are مَبْنِي on فَتْحَة. For example: إِحْدَى

أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا (*eleven stars*) or عَشْرَةَ مَدِينَةً (*eleven cities*)

12 : For 12 the unit part is مُعْرَبٌ but the ten is not ; it is مَبْنِي on فَتْحَة and both numerals agree

in gender with the noun, thus: اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا (*twelve months*) or اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا

(*twelve springs*) and اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ مَدِينَةً (*twelve cities*) and اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا

(*twelve chiefs*) and اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ مَدِينَةً (*twelve cities*). Note that the اثْنَتَا / اثْنَا form is the رَفْع form whereas the اثْنَتَيْ / اثْنَيْ form is the

نَصْب / جر form. These 4 forms occur only for the number 12.

13-19 : For this range the unit part goes into the opposite gender to that of the noun whereas the ten

part matches it. Both the parts are مَبْنِي on فَتْحَة . For Example: ثَلَاثَةَ عَشَرَ رَجُلًا (*thirteen men*) or ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ امْرَأَةً (*thirteen women*)

Note the use of عَشَرَ for masculine and عَشْرَةَ for feminine nouns.

20-90 : These do not have a gender attached to them and follow the إعراب rule for the [Sound Masculine](#)

[Plural](#). For example: ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً (*eighty lashes*) or أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً (*forty years*) or ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا (*thirty months*)

100, 200 / 1000, 2000 etc: The noun in this case is singular مَجْرُور and there is no gender associated

with the noun. For example: مِائَةُ عَامٍ (*one hundred years*) or أَلْفُ سَنَةٍ (*one thousand years*).

I hope this introduction to Arabic numbers will make it easier for beginners to learn this complex topic, Insha Allah. So read this post and let me know your feedback!

الأفعول المطلق - Nahw - Let us hit a hitting or rejoice a rejoicing

In the Arabic Language a verb may take its مَصْدَر to express:

1. Emphasis or magnification of action
2. Manner of action
3. Number of times the action occurred

Note: The مَصْدَر (also known as the *verbal noun*) is a word that indicates the occurrence of an

action and is free of tense e.g. نَصَرَ (to assist)

The مَصْدَر, when used as such, is known as الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَق (or the *absolute object*)

and is always in the state of نصب.

An example of first kind of الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَق is إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًّا (when the earth will be shaken with a shaking) i.e. shaken violently. Here the verb *shake* is being emphasized. This

structure is also called التَّكْيِيد. For still greater emphasis the مَصْدَر may be reproduced a third

time e.g. إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (when the earth will be crushed a crushing, crushing)

The second kind of الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَق can be exemplified by the sentence

جَلَسْتُ جَلْسَةَ الْقَارِي (I sat like a Qari would sit) where the manner of *sitting* is being

described. This structure is also called النَّوْع

Finally the third kind of الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَق can be depicted by the phrase دَقَّتِ السَّاعَةُ

دَقَّتَيْنِ (the clock struck to strikings) i.e. the clock struck twice. This structure is also called

التَّمِينُ

Sometimes the adjective alone is expressed and the الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَقُ is understood e.g.

ضَرَبَ شَدِيداً (he struck violently) which was actually

ضَرَبَ ضَرْباً شَدِيداً.

Some very interesting usage of the الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَقُ can be seen in everyday phrases like

أُسْعِدْكَ اسْعَادَيْنِ سَعْدَيْنِ which was originally اسْعِدْكَ اسْعَادَيْنِ (I am here to help) i.e. I am here to help

not one, but two times. Similarly, مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ was originally

أَعُوذُ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ (I seek the refuge of Allah) i.e. Allah forbid!. Another example of this usage is

قَدِمْتَ قَدْوماً خَيْراً مَقْدَمِ which was actually قَدِمْتَ قَدْوماً خَيْراً مَقْدَمِ (you came a blessed coming)

i.e. Welcome!

Insha Allah this introduction to the concept of الْمَفْعُولُ الْمُطْلَقُ will go a long way in

helping the students of Classical Arabic towards a better understanding of Arabic Grammar.

Nahw - The concept of حال and ذوالحال

The concept of حال in نحو is used to answer the question “How” or “in what condition”. Thus,

حال is the adjective which describes the state of the فاعِل or مفعول or both. It is always in the state of

ذوالحال. Additionally, the one being described by the condition is called نصب.

Some examples of this kind of structure are:

- جاء زَيْدٌ رَاكِباً (Zaid came riding) Here رَاكِباً is حال for زَيْدٌ which is the فاعِل
- جِئْتُ زَيْدًا نَائِمًا (I came to Zaid while he was sleeping). Here the word نَائِمًا is the
زَيْدًا for the مفعول, which is حال
- كَلَّمْتُ زَيْدًا جَالِسَيْنِ (I talked to Zaid while we were both sitting). Here the word
جَالِسَيْنِ is the حال for both the فاعِل and the مفعول

Notes on the usage of حال and ذوالحال

It is essential to have a connector between the حال and the ذوالحال. Sometimes this connector is

depicted by using a و and at other times it is simply the ضَمِير hidden within the verb. For example,

we can say جَاءَ زَيْدٌ يَضْحَكُ or

جَاءَ زَيْدٌ وَهُوَ يَضْحَكُ. In both the cases it means *Zaid came laughing*. However, the first sentence is the case where the connector is the hidden هُوَ inside the verb whereas in the second sentence the connector is apparent.

ذُو الْحَالِ has to be نَكِرَةٌ, it cannot be مَعْرِفَةٌ. On the other hand, even though ذُو الْحَالِ

is usually مَعْرِفَةٌ but if it has to come as نَكِرَةٌ then the structure has to change and the ذُو الْحَالِ has to come before ذُو الْحَالِ i.e.

جَاءَنِي رَاكِبًا رَجُلٌ (*a man came to me riding*).

Also, ذُو الْحَالِ can be a sentence as well: If it is a جُمْلَةٌ اسْمِيَّةٌ then a وَ is added to give the meaning of condition e.g.

لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَى (*Do not come near the prayers when you are intoxicated*); if

it is a جُمْلَةٌ فِعْلِيَّةٌ and the فِعْلٌ is in مَاضِي then a قَدْ has to appear before the فِعْلٌ e.g.

جَاءَ زَيْدٌ وَقَدْ خَرَجَ غُلَامُهُ (*Zaid came while his servant went*)

Hopefully this very brief introduction to the concept of ذُو الْحَالِ will be sufficient for the students of Classical Arabic as a starting point, Insha Allah.

التوابع - The Followers - Nahw

There are numerous instances in Arabic Language where an اسم is followed by another اسم. The idea is to build sentences like "tall boy", or "The student has a book and a pen", or "Zaid and Amr both are sick" etc. In such cases the اسم which comes later is called تَابِعٌ (the follower) and the one which it follows is called مَتَّبُوعٌ (the followed one). The إعراب of تَابِعٌ are in accordance with its

مَتَّبُوعٌ

The تَوَابِع are of 5 kinds:

- صِفَت or the Adjective
- عَطْف or the Conjunction
- تَأْكِيد or Emphasis
- بَدَل or the Substitution
- عَطْفِ بَيَان or the Explanatory Attachment

صِفَت : In Arabic the صِفَت follows its مَوْصُوف and agrees with it in

1. Grammatical State
2. Definitiveness

3. Number

4. Gender

Examples of this kind of structure are عَلِيٍّ رَجُلٌ كَرِيمٌ (*a noble man*),

صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ (*upon the right path*) or

الطَّالِبَانِ قَارِئَتَانِ كِتَابَيْنِ مُفِيدَيْنِ (*Two students are reading two beneficial books*)

عَظْفٌ or the *Conjunction*, as it is called in English, is used to connect two

which are in the same ruling. The occurring before the عَظْفٌ (i.e. the

مَتَّبُوعٌ) is called مَعْطُوفٌ عَلَيْهِ and the one following it (i.e. the

مَتَّبُوعٌ) is called مَعْطُوفٌ. Some of the commonly used عَظْفٌ are:

- وَ (*and*): This is used to join two independent words or sentences

e.g.

سَعْدٌ وَعَلِيٌّ صَحَابِيَّانِ (*Sa'ad and Ali are Sahabi*). If وَ is

connecting two sentences and the second one is a جُمْلَةٌ

اِسْمِيَّةٌ then وَ takes on the meaning of *while* and such a

sentence introduced by the وَ is called جُمْلَةٌ حَالِيَّةٌ. For

example, قَامَ زَيْدٌ وَهُوَ يَبْكِي (*Zaid stood up [while]*

weeping)

- **فَ (and so, and then, and consequently):** This is sometimes used to join words but is more generally used to join sentences where it indicates a development in the narrative. Thus, when joining two clauses, it shows either that the latter is immediately subsequent to the former in time, or that it is connected with it by some internal link, like cause and effect: for example,

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ

(Casting against them stones of baked clay, So He rendered them like straw eaten up)

- **ثُمَّ (then):** This conjunction is used to imply succession at an interval. E.g.

فَتَوَلَّىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَتَىٰ

(Then Pharaoh withdrew and concerted his plan and then came to the place of appointment)

- **أَوْ (or):** For example:

وَقَالُوا لَنُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا أَوْ

تَكُونُ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ *(They say, "We will not believe you unless you cause a spring to gush out of the ground or you have a garden...)*

- أَمْ (or): This is used in interrogative structures, for example:

أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ (is there an exemption for you in the scriptures?)

- بَلْ (rather): For example, بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرُّ (rather he is an insolent liar)

تَاكِيد This class of تَوَابِع is used for the purposes of emphasis either by using certain specific words or by employing repetition . It is subdivided in two sub-classes:

1. التَّوَكِيدُ الْمَعْنَوِيُّ : There are certain words in the Arabic Language that are used to strengthen the idea of totality or self already contained in the مَتَبُّوع . These are grouped together under the sub-class of تَاكِيد called التَّوَكِيدُ الْمَعْنَوِيُّ i.e. corroboration in meaning. Some examples of these words are كُلٌّ or جَمِيعٌ or نَفْسٌ. For example: الْوَزِيرُ ذَاهِبٌ نَفْسُهُ (The minister himself is going) or

زَيْدٌ وَبَكْرٌ كِلَاهُمَا مَرِيضَانِ (Zaid and Bakr both are sick). Note that,

to use التَّوَكِيدُ الْمَعْنَوِيُّ , you have to use the corresponding pronoun with the تَابِع

2. التَّوَكِيدُ : The other sub-class of تَاكِيد is called التَّوَكِيدُ اللَّفْظِيّ.

اللفظي i.e. the verbal corroboration, which consists of repetition by

means of words. For example: الْعِلْمُ نَافِعٌ نَافِعٌ (*Knowledge is*

beneficial, beneficial) or مَرَرْتُ بِكَ بِكَ (*I passed by you, by you*)

بَدَل is the kind of تَابِع before which another اسم is used merely to introduce the

تَابِع. For example: أَخُو زَيْدٍ حَسَنٌ حَاضِرٌ (*Zaid's brother, Hassan, is here*).

Here حَسَن, the تَابِع, is called بَدَل and أَخُو زَيْدٍ, the مَتَّبِع, is called

بَدَلٌ مِنْهُ. There are four kinds of بَدَل :

1. بَدَلُ الْكُلِّ where both the بَدَل and the بَدَلٌ مِنْهُ denote the same اسم.

For example:

جَآئَنِي قَوْمٌ الْمَدِينَةُ كُبْرَاؤُهُمْ وَضُعَفَاؤُهُمْ (*The people of the city, the great and the small, came to me*)

2. بَدَلُ الْبَعْضِ or the substitution of the part for the whole. For example:

أَكَلْتُ الرِّغِيْفَ ثُلُثَهُ (*I hit Zaid, on his head*) or ضَرَبْتُ زَيْدًا رَأْسَهُ (*I ate the loaf, the third part of it*)

3. بَدَلُ الْأَشْتِمَالِ where the بَدَل is not part of the بَدَلٌ مِنْهُ but is rather related to it. For example,

فِي (Zaid, his learning filled me with surprise) or أَعْجَبَنِي زَيْدٌ عِلْمُهُ

يَدِ الطَّالِبِ الْكِتَابُ غِلَافُهُ (The student has the book cover in his hand)

4. بَدَلُ الْغَلَطِ is the بَدَلُ which is mentioned after an error. For example,

إِشْتَرَيْتُ فَرَسًا حِمَارًا (I bought a horse - no, a donkey)

Note that in both بَدَلُ الْأَشْتِمَالِ and بَدَلُ الْبَعْضِ a pronoun has to be brought

in with the مُبْدَلُ مِنْهُ

مَتَّبِعُ is the تَابِعُ which is used to more clearly define its مَتَّبِعُ. For example,

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ كَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ (Allah has ordained Ka'ba - the Sacred House - as sanctified) or

يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ ([which] is lighted [with oil of] a blessed tree, an olive)

This wraps up our discussion of تَوَابِعُ . Hopefully, this post will be helpful for those planning to delve a little deep into the technicalities of Classical Arabic Grammar, Insha Allah.

Sarf

Sarf is the science of Classical Arabic which deals with:

1. patterns of vowelization which indicate tense of a verb
2. designated endings which reflect the *gender*, *plurality*, and *person* of the Subject (the one doing the verb)

Gender: There are two genders in Arabic: *Masculine* and *Feminine*. Unlike English, there is no neutral gender in Arabic. All nouns are masculine unless they are defined feminine, either by general agreement e.g. *Umm* (Mother), *shams* (Sun), or by the the ending **ة** which is called *ta marbuta*.

Plurality :In Arabic there are three ways of describing the number of nouns: *single*, *dual*, and *plural* (*more than 2*).

Person: Similar to English, there are three persons in Arabic: *1st*, *2nd*, and *3rd*

According to the above scheme the Subject of a verb can cause 18 (2 x 3 x 3) changes to the patterns of vowelization and designated endings of that verb. These are listed below:

3rd person Masculine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

3rd person Feminine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

2nd person Masculine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

2nd person Feminine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

1st person Masculine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

1st person Feminine Singular/Dual/Plural **3**

However, the 1st person Masculine Singular/Dual and 1st person Feminine Singular/Dual are condensed as one; thus, the total is reduced by 4, bringing it to 14. A complete listing of these is given in the table below (note: this is taken from page 20 of Hussain Abdul Sattar's Book, **Fundamentals of Classical Arabic**, available [here](#)).

PERSON	GENDER	PLURALITY	BASE		SUFFIX		ACTIVE VOICE
3rd	Masculine	Singular	فعل			⇒	فَعَلَ He/It (S/M) did
3rd	Masculine	Dual	فعل	+	ا	⇒	فَعَلَا They (D/M) did
3rd	Masculine	Plural	فعل	+	وا	⇒	فَعَلُوا ^{١٥} They (P/M) did
3rd	Feminine	Singular	فعل	+	ت	⇒	فَعَلَتْ She/It (S/F) did
3rd	Feminine	Dual	فعل	+	تا	⇒	فَعَلَتَا They (D/F) did
3rd	Feminine	Plural	فعل	+	ن	⇒	فَعَلْنَ They (P/F) did
2nd	Masculine	Singular	فعل	+	ت	⇒	فَعَلْتَ You (S/M) did
2nd	Masculine	Dual	فعل	+	تُما	⇒	فَعَلْتُمَا You (D/M) did
2nd	Masculine	Plural	فعل	+	تُمْ	⇒	فَعَلْتُمْ You (P/M) did
2nd	Feminine	Singular	فعل	+	تِ	⇒	فَعَلْتِ You (S/F) did
2nd	Feminine	Dual	فعل	+	تُما	⇒	فَعَلْتُمَا You (D/F) did
2nd	Feminine	Plural	فعل	+	تُنَّ	⇒	فَعَلْتُنَّ You (P/F) did
1st	Masculine and Feminine	Singular	فعل	+	تُ	⇒	فَعَلْتُ I did
1st	Masculine and Feminine	Plural	فعل	+	نَا	⇒	فَعَلْنَا We did

M=Masculine

F=Feminine

S=Singular

D=Dual

P=Plural

Sarf - Variations of the Past Tense

Until now we have seen how to conjugate verbs using the simple past tense e.g. *he ate, he helped, he did* etc. Now we will see how we can couple some words to the past tense verb and make it either *present perfect* e.g. *he has helped* or *past perfect* e.g. *he had helped*.

Sticking the word **قد** in front of a past tense verb makes it *present perfect*. Thus, **قد** denotes actions

which have just been completed e.g. *he has helped, he has done, he has read* etc. Note that **قد** is a **حرف**

(i.e. a *particle*) so it does *not* change its form with the changing form of the verb. As an example, **نَصَرَ**

means *he helped* and **قد نَصَرَ** means *he has helped*. The significance of this will become clear when we

deal with the next section about making past perfect tense. One more thing to note is that you cannot

attach a **ما** in front of **قد** to negate it: this construction is *not* allowed in Arabic.

If we add **كان** in front of a past tense verb the verb becomes *past perfect*. Thus, **كان** denotes actions

which have been completed in distant past. However, **كان** is a verb, just like **فَعَلَ**, so it will also change

its form when coupled with the past tense verb. The following table shows how this is done:

كَانَ نَصَرَ	He had helped
كَانَا نَصَرَا	They (2 males) had helped
كَانُوا نَصَرُوا	They (many males) had helped
كَانَتْ نَصَرَتْ	She had helped
كَانَتَا نَصَرَتَا	They (2 females) had helped
كُنَّ نَصَرْنَ	They (many females) had helped
كُنْتَ نَصَرْتَ	You (1 male) had helped

كُنْتُمْ نَصَرْتُمْ	You (2 males) had helped
كُنْتُمْ نَصَرْتُمْ	You (many males) had helped
كُنْتَ نَصَرْتَ	You (1 female) had helped
كُنْتُمْ نَصَرْتُمْ	You (2 females) had helped
كُنْتُنَّ نَصَرْتُنَّ	You (many females) had helped
كُنْتُ نَصَرْتُ	I had helped
كُنَّا نَصَرْنَا	We had helped

The negation of this conjugation is constructed simply by adding a **مَا** in front of it. Also, the passive voice for this conjugation is constructed the same way as before: *dhamma* on the first letter, *kasra* on the second last letter.

Sarf - المضارع - The Present and Future Tense

مُضَارِع is the tense in Arabic which conveys the meaning of both present (simple and continuous) and future tenses. The context and situation of the usage will determine which of the above three are meant to be conveyed. It is what is called the *Imperfect* tense in English i.e. the action is either going on or is still to start.

Unlike the ماضى , the مُضَارِع is peculiar in its nature because it is characterized by the presence of one of the 4 letters, namely ا , ت , ي , ن (hamza, taa, ya'a, nun) at the start of a word . Thus a مُضَارِع verb will have one of these 4 letters as a prefix. Plus, unlike the ماضى, the endings of مُضَارِع verbs do not follow a set pattern but are rather based on loose groupings. Mentioned below are the prefix and suffix rules for the 14 conjugations:

Prefix Rules:

1. **Conjugation** 1,2,3, and 6 will have ي as prefix
2. **Conjugations** 4,5,7,8,9,10,11,12 will have ت as a prefix
3. **Conjugation** 13 will have ا as a prefix
4. **Conjugation** 14 will have ن as a prefix

Suffix Rules:

1. 5 conjugations will have no suffix at all i.e. the last letter of the word will be the base letter of

the verb. These are conjugations 1,4,7, 13, and 14

2. 9 conjugations are further subdivided into 4 groups:

- The 4 duals (3rd person *Dual* Masculine/Feminine, 2nd person *Dual*

Masculine/Feminine) will have an ending consisting of an **الف** followed by a **ن** with a

kasra e.g. **تَفْعَلَانِ** . These are conjugations 2,5,8, and 11

- The 2 Masculine Plural Conjugations, number 3 and 9, will end in **ونَ** i.e. **و** preceded by

a *dhamma* and succeeded by a **ن** with a *fatha* e.g. **يَفْعَلُونَ**

- The 2 Feminine Plural Conjugations, number 6 and 12, will end with a *sukun* on the

laam position of the verb followed by a **ن** with a *fatha*

- The 2nd person *Singular* Feminine, conjugation number 10, has the suffix **ينَ** i.e. a *yaa*

saakin plus a **ن** with a *fathae*.g. **تَفْعَلِينَ**

The Table below lists all these

يَفْعَلُ	He does
يَفْعَلَانِ	They (Dual, Male) do
يَفْعَلُونَ	They (Plural, Male) do
تَفْعَلُ	She does
تَفْعَلَانِ	They (Dual, Female) do
يَفْعَلْنَ	They (Plural, Female) do
تَفْعَلُ	You (Singular, Male) do
تَفْعَلَانِ	You (Dual, Male) do
تَفْعَلُونَ	You (Plural, Male) do
تَفْعَلِينَ	You (Singular, Female) do

تَفْعَلَانِ	You (Dual, Female) do
تَفْعَلْنَ	You (Plural, Female) do
أَفْعَلُ	I do
نَفْعَلُ	We do

The passive voice for the مُضَارِع is constructed by:

1. Putting a *fatha* on the second last letter (if not already a *fatha*)
2. Adding a *dhamma* to the prefix

Thus, يَنْصُرُ becomes يُنْصَرُ (he is helped, he is being helped, or he will be helped).

Adding لَا in front of both active and passive voice of the مُضَارِع will negate it

Sarf - Variations of المضارع

Welcome back to صرف, finally! After a long haul with نحو we are back in the domain of صرف. Insha

Allah I will explain some of the variations which can occur with المضارع (the present and future tense verb) and how the grammatical structure and meaning of the verb will change with these variations.

There are two حرف (particles) which will combine with the المضارع to change it to a negative verb: لن and لم. Each of these imparts a slightly different meaning to the resulting verb and each of them will cause the original verb to have different endings as well.

1. لن : Adding لن to المضارع will negate it and will restrict it to the *future* tense. Remember here that we had earlier said that المضارع covers both present and future. So now we know how to talk about just about the future! Finally, when لن negates the المضارع an element of emphasis is added to the negation. Thus, لن يَنْصُرَ means *he will never help* and لن يُنْصَرَ means *he will never be helped*.
2. لم : Adding لم to المضارع will negate it and will remove all notions of present and future tense from the verb, thus rendering it back into past! This might seem a little odd since we already have the الماضي (past tense) with us and we have already seen that we can negate it by using ما. So why *exactly* do we need to stick لم in front of المضارع to construct what we already have? The

difference here is rather subtle: If your listeners have no previous knowledge of an event occurring and you want to say that the event did not happen (meaning you are simply informing them of the action not occurring) then you would use **مَا** ; on the other hand if you are speaking to someone who has incorrect knowledge of the event and believes that the event *did* occur whereas the event *did* not occur then you would use **لَمْ**. So **مَا نَصَرَ** is simple negation whereas **لَمْ يَنْصُرْ** has the element of *rejection* in it. One way of putting this is to say that **لَمْ** is used when arguing with someone.

Rules for Conjugating المضارع + لن :

1. The 5 conjugations which ended in *dhamma* will now end in *fatha*
2. Out of the remaining 9 all except the two feminine plurals will lose their final ن
3. The two feminine plurals will *not* undergo any change

He will never do	لَنْ يَفْعَلَ
They (2 males) will never do	لَنْ يَفْعَلَا
They (group of males) will never do	لَنْ يَفْعَلُوا
She will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلَ
She (2 females) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلَا
She (group of females) will never do	لَنْ يَفْعَلْنَ
You (male) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلَ
You (2 males) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلَا
You (group of males) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلُوا
You (female) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلِي

You (2 females) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلَا
You (group of females) will never do	لَنْ تَفْعَلْنَ
I will never do	لَنْ أَفْعَلَ
We will never do	لَنْ نَفْعَلَ

Rules for Conjugating المضارع + لم :

1. The 5 conjugations which ended in *dhamma* will now end in *sukun*
2. Out of the remaining 9 all except the two feminine plurals will lose their final ن
3. The two feminine plurals will *not* undergo any change

He did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلْ
They (2 males) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلَا
They (group of males) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا
She did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْ
She (2 females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا
She (group of females) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلْنَ
You (male) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْ
You (2 males) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا
You (group of males) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا
You (female) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلِي
You (2 females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا
You (group of females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْنَ
I did not do	لَمْ أَفْعَلْ
We did not do	لَمْ نَفْعَلْ

Two final points:

1. The passive of the لَنْ construct is built by switching the *fatha* on the first letter to a *dhamma* e.g.

لَنْ يَفْعَلَ becomes لَنْ يُفْعَلَ , and so on

2. The passive of the **لم** construct is built by switching the *fatha* on the first letter to a *dhamma*

e.g. لَمْ يَفْعَلْ becomes لَمْ يُفْعَلْ , and so on

Sarf - More variations of المضارع

Here we go! We are now back dealing with المضارع . In this post we will deal with some more variations of the future tense. In a previous [post](#) I had explained how المضارع , which encompasses both present and future tense in Arabic, can be limited to future tense only. However, recall that at that time we had done this by *negating* the verb. In this post, Insha Allah, I will show how to do the same without negating the verb i.e. how to say *he will help, she will help* etc. Secondly, I will also talk about the *imperative* for المضارع i.e. how to say *verily he will help, verily you will help* etc.

Simple Future Tense: This is built by simply adding a س or سَوْفَ in front of each conjugation of المضارع verb; this will restrict the tense to future. Thus, يَفْعَلُ becomes سَيَفْعَلُ (or سَوْفَ يَفْعَلُ) and so on. That's it! There is nothing more to building a simple future tense verb in Arabic, so we will move onto our next variation.

Emphatic Future Tense: This one is *not* going to be as easy as the three-liner above. 😊 To build the emphatic for المضارع not only do we have add a ل in front of it (with a *fatha*), but the endings of the verb change as well. More specifically, a ن is added at the end of the verb. It is interesting to note that this ن can be in a مُشَدَّد (i.e. with a *shadda* on it) form or in the سَاكِن (i.e. with a *sukun* on it) form. The former is called ن ثَقِيلَة and the latter is called ن خَفِيفَة , literally meaning *heavy nun* and *light nun*, respectively.

In terms of meaning the two endings do not differ, except in their tone. Thus one may be picked up over the other to satisfy complex poetry rules or when giving sermons. Meaning wise, there is no difference between the two conjugations, be they are formed from ن ثقيلة or ن خفيفة . Let us now see how these conjugations are formed:

1. The five singulars will have there ending *dhamma* changed to a *fatha* and the final ن , either مُشَدَّد or ساكن , will added. Thus, يَفْعَلُ becomes كَيْفَعَلَنَّ . Please see table below for full listing of conjugations. Also note that there is a *fatha* on ل (just before the final ن ثقيلة . The reason for this will become obvious as I explain the conjugation change for the two plural masculines (see bullet #3 below)
2. The four duals, which already have a ن at the end, will have this ن dropped so that we do not end up having three ن when we attach a ن ثقيلة or ن خفيفة to the end of the conjugations. Moreover, the final ن will have a *kasra* on it
3. The two masculine plurals (تَفْعَلُونَ and يَفْعَلُونَ) and the second person feminine singular (تَفْعَلِينَ) will have their و and ى dropped and either ن ثقيلة or ن خفيفة will be added with a *kasra* on it.

Now imagine what would have happened had we *not* changed the *dhamma* on يَفْعَلُ to a *fatha* when forming the emphatic conjugation: the final form then would have been كَيْفَعَلَنَّ . But this is *also* the form which we get when we transform the third person masculine plural to the emphatic

conjugation! Therefore, to avoid confusion, the *dhamma* on the third person masculine singular **يَفْعَلُ** is changed to a *fatha* when forming the future emphatic. Conversely, the *dhamma* on the two masculine plurals which remains there in the emphatic conjugation is an indication of the dropped **و**. Similarly, the *kasra* on the second person feminine singular future emphatic form is an indication of the dropped **ي**

4. Nothing will drop from the two plural feminines. However, to ease pronunciation, an **الف** is inserted between the original final **ن** and the emphatic-forming **ن ثقيلة** or **ن خفيفة**

Verily he will do	لَيَفْعَلَنَّ
Verily they (2 males) will do	لَيَفْعَلَانَّ
Verily they (group of males) will do	لَيَفْعُلَنَّ
Verily she will do	لَتَفْعَلَنَّ
Verily they (2 females) will do	لَتَفْعَلَانَّ
Verily they (group of females) will do	لَيَفْعَلْنَانَّ
Verily You (male) will do	لَتَفْعَلَنَّ
Verily you (2 males) will do	لَتَفْعَلَانَّ
Verily you (group of males) will do	لَتَفْعُلَنَّ
Verily you (females) will do	لَتَفْعَلِنَّ
Verily you (2 females) will do	لَتَفْعَلَانَّ
Verily you (group of females) will do	لَتَفْعَلْنَانَّ
Verily I will do	لَأَفْعَلَنَّ
Verily we will do	لَتَفْعَلَنَّ

Notes:

1. An example of ن خفيفة conjugation is: كَيْفَعَلْنَ
2. There are 6 less conjugation in the خفيفة tables than there are in the ثقيلة tables. This is because the ن خفيفة is *not* attached to those conjugations which end in an الف (the four duals and the two feminine plurals). Thus, rules 2 and 4 do not apply to the خفيفة tables

Sarf - The Command Verb: constructing the امر

The command verb, or the امر , is different from other verb conjugations previously covered in the sense that a command is usually directed *towards* a second person e.g *eat!* or *stop!*; thus, the construction of 2nd person command verb in Arabic is different from that of other conjugations of the same. Also, at first, it seems rather odd that we can even have a command verb in 1st or 3rd person conjugations. However, examples like *He must eat!* and *They must abstain!* do give us good examples of command verbs in persons other than second.

Based on the above information we see that the 2nd person active command verb requires special attention. In fact, it's construction rules are a bit different than those of 1st & 3rd person active command verb. Below I give the general rules which govern the construction of active voice command verbs in Arabic:

1. 2nd Person Active Command verb - constructed using active verb of the مضارع and applying 3

specific steps

2. 1st & 3rd person active & passive and 2nd person passive - constructed using the endings of the لم

table and attaching لام of امر in front of each conjugation

Insha Allah we will see now how these rules are applied in practice.

As a first step we divide the لم table into two sections - 2nd person (left side) and 3rd & 1st persons (right side):

You (male) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْ	He did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلْ
You (2 males) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا	They (2 males) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلَا
You (group of males) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا	They (group of males) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا
You (female) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلِي	She did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْ
You (2 females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا	She (2 females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا
You (group of females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْنَ	She (group of females) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلْنَ
		I did not do	لَمْ أَفْعَلْ
		We did not do	لَمْ نَفْعَلْ

Constructing the 1st Person / 3rd Person Active command verb:

1. Attach a **لَمْ** with a *kasra* in front of each conjugation and keep the endings exactly as those in

the **لَمْ** table. This rule also applies to the passive construction. Here I will only give examples of

the active voice:

He must do!	لَفْعَلْ
They (2 males) must do!	لَفْعَلَا
They (group of males) must do!	لَفْعَلُوا
She must do!	لَفْعَلْ
She (2 females) must do!	لَفْعَلَا
She (group of females) must do!	لَفْعَلْنَ
I must do!	لَأَفْعَلْ
We must do!	لَفْعَلْ

Constructing the 2nd Person Active command verb:

These conjugations are constructed from the **مضارع** verb as outlined below:

1. Remove the sign of **مضارع** i.e. **ت** from the verb

2. After removing the sign of مضارع if the next letter (i.e. the ف position) has a vowel on it then simply make the last letter of the remaining word *sakin* and use the endings from the لم table .

An example of this kind would be تَقَبَّلْ Since the second letter already has a *fathah* on it therefore the command verb would be تَقَبَّلْ

3. After removing the sign of مضارع if the next letter is *sakin* then it cannot be pronounced since words need to start with a vowel (*dhamma, fatha, kasra*). In this case, we add a *hamza* (ء) in front of the word to aid pronunciation, and then look at the ع position of the word: if this letter has a *dhamma* then we put a *dhamma* on the *hamza* which is at the front of the word. However, if this letter has either a *fathah* or a *kasra* we put a *kasrah* on the *hamza*. Examples of this construction are:

• أَنْصُرْ which changes to أَنْصُرْ

4. اضْرِبْ which changes to اضْرِبْ

5. اِسْمَعْ which changes to اِسْمَعْ

A complete listing of the 2nd Person Active command verb is given below. Note that the endings remain that of the لم table:

You (male) do!	افْعَلْ
You (2 males) do!	افْعَلَا

You (group of males) do!	إِفْعَلُواْ
You (female) do!	إِفْعَلِيْ
You (2 females) do!	إِفْعَلَاْ
You (group of females) do!	إِفْعَلْنَ

The Emphatic Command :

In addition to saying *He must do!* we can also give an emphatic command: *Verily, he must do!*, which is the addition of emphasis to the command verb. Since we know that emphasis in Arabic can be achieved either by using *ن ثقيلة* or *ن خفيفة* , therefore we can have command verb conjugations in the emphatic form. The table below lists these conjugations for the active voice. Notice that the endings are exactly those of the emphatic table and that the *لام* of *امر* (with a *kasra*) replaces the *لام* with a *fatha* at the start in the 3rd and 1st person conjugations (and also in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person passive conjugations). Plus, the 2nd person active conjugations still start with *ا ف*

ن ثقيلة conjugations for the command verb:

Verily [You (male)] do!	فَعِلْ	Verily he must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ
Verily [you (2 males)] do!	فَعِلَا	Verily they (2 males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلَا
Verily [you (group of males)] do!	فَعِلْنَ	Verily they (group of males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلْنَ
Verily [you (female)] do!	فَعِلِي	Verily she must do!	لَتَفْعَلِي
Verily [you (2 females)] do!	فَعِلَا	Verily they (2 females) must do!	لَتَفْعَلَا
Verily [you (group of females)] do!	فَعِلْنَ	Verily they (group of females) must do!	لِيَفْعَلْنَ
		Verily I must do!	لَا فَعِلْ
		Verily we must do!	لَنَفْعَلْ

ن خفيفة conjugations for the command verb:

Verily [You (male)] do!	فَعَلْ مَنْ	Verily he must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ مَنْ
Verily [you (2 males)] do!		Verily they (2 males) must do!	
Verily [you (group of males)] do!	فَعَلْ مَنْ	Verily they (group of males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ مَنْ
Verily [you (female)] do!	فَعَلْ مَنْ	Verily she must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ مَنْ
Verily [you (2 females)] do!		Verily they (2 females) must do!	
Verily [you (group of females)] do!		Verily they (group of females) must do!	
		Verily I must do!	لَا فَعَلْ مَنْ
		Verily we must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ مَنْ

Sarf - ابواب الافعال - Introduction to Verb Groupings

Up until now we have been dealing with just one type of the base verb i.e. **فَعَلَ** . However, this is not the only way a base verb can occur in Arabic. In fact, the **ماضى** verb (and consequently the **مُضارع** verb) can occur in several different *patterns* depending upon the vowelling and number of letters in the base verb. In this post, I will, Insha Allah, explain about different patterns of Arabic verbs along with some of their examples.

To start with, we may be tempted to assume that any two verbs which have the same voice, same tense, and the same conjugation number will look alike and will rhyme with one another. However, this is not the case as can be seen by looking at the following 3 examples:

1. **نَصَرَ**

2. **سَمِعَ**

3. **دَهَرَجَ**

The first verb, **نَصَرَ** (to help), rhymes with **فَعَلَ** and has the same number of letters as **فَعَلَ** .

The second verb, **سَمِعَ** (to hear), although having the same number of letters as **فَعَلَ** , does *not*

rhyme with it due to a *kasra* on the middle letter. Finally, the last verb, **دَهَرَجَ** (to roll), does not

rhyme with فَعَلَ , and also has 4 letters in it, rather than 3. As a rule of thumb, differences in Arabic

verbs can occur due to one of 6 reasons:

- 3 of these reasons relate to number of letters in the base verb and its vowelling pattern
- 3 of these reasons relate to irregularities. These have nothing to do with number of base letters

or the vowelling pattern of the verb. Rather, these difference in verbs are introduced by the

presence of certain letters e.g. و , ي , ء

In this post I will deal with the first 3 rules which can be stated into the following expanded categories:

1. Difference in number of base letters of a verb
2. Difference in the way the verb is enhanced
3. Difference in the ع position vowelling of a verb

The minimum number of letters in a base verb is 3 and the maximum is 4. Each one of these two sets of verbs may comprise of only base letters (i.e. without any enhancement) or they may have addition of non-base, or extra, letters (i.e. enhanced), which provides us with 4 distinct verb groupings:

1. Verbs with 3 base letters which are not enhanced, called ثَلَاثِي مُجَرَّد e.g. نَصَرَ
2. Verbs with 3 base letters which are enhanced, called ثَلَاثِي مُزِيد فِيهِ e.g. أَكْرَمَ
3. Verbs with 4 base letters which are not enhanced, called رُبَاعِي مُجَرَّد e.g. دَهَرَجَ
4. Verbs with 4 base letters which are enhanced, called رُبَاعِي مُزِيد فِيهِ e.g. اِطْمَعَنَّ

On top of this, verbs can differ in the way the vowel appears on the ع position. Using the ثَلَاثِي مُجَرَّد

form of ماضِي and switching the vowel on the ع position, we get 3 distinct patterns:

1. فَعَلَ
2. فَعِلَ

3. فَعْلَ

For each of these patterns of a مُجرّد ثلاثي verb, there will exist 3 corresponding مُضارع patterns with their own vowelling patterns, giving us 9 patterns in total which are listed in the table below:

#	مُضارع	ماضى
1	يَفْعَلُ	فَعَلَ
2	يَفْعِلُ	فَعَلَ
3	يَفْعُلُ	فَعَلَ
4	يَفْعَلُ	فَعِلَ
5	يَفْعِلُ	فَعِلَ
6	يَفْعُلُ	فَعِلَ
7	يَفْعَلُ	فَعُلَ
8	يَفْعِلُ	فَعُلَ
9	يَفْعُلُ	فَعُلَ

The patterns 6, 7, and 8 *do not* exist in the Arabic Language, which means that you will never find a

مُجرّد ثلاثي verb based on this pattern of vowelling. As for the remaining 6, each pattern is called a

باب (*door*) and can be defined as an *etymological grouping which arises due to a difference in number*

of letters or the ع position vowelling in **both** ماضى and مُضارع patterns of a verb. Every مُجرّد ثلاثي

verb in Arabic will follow *exactly one* of these patterns. To ease memorization of these ابواب the

scholars of صرف have picked up the most widely used example from each of them and have named the

باب after it. These are listed in the following table in their order of popularity:

#	مُضَارِع	ماضى
1	يَنْصُرُ	نَصَرَ
2	يَضْرِبُ	ضَرَبَ
3	يَسْمَعُ	سَمِعَ
4	يَفْتَحُ	فَتَحَ
5	يَكْرُمُ	كَرَّمَ
6	يَحْسِبُ	حَسَبَ

I post here another way of remembering these ابواب , courtesy of [IANT](#)



The ثلاثي مزيد فيه ابواب :

Enhancement to verbs can be done in various ways: duplication of the ع position e.g. < عِلْمَ -

عِلْمَ (to know -> to teach), or adding a *hamzah*, called همزة الوصل (or the *enabling hamza*, which is

added to ease pronunciation), at the front of the verb. This can be noticed with the ثلاثي مزيد فيه which

has 14 ابواب, out of which 5 do not have the enabling *hamzah* in front of them and all of these 5 are

popular. The rest of the 9 have the enabling *hamza* in front of them and only 3 are popular from among

theses nine. The 5 ابواب of ثلاثي مزيد فيه without the همزة الوصل are given in the table below:

#	مُضَارِع	ماضى
1	يُكْرِمُ	أَكْرَمَ
2	يُصَرِّفُ	صَرَّفَ

3	يُقَامِلُ	قَاتِل
4	يَتَقَابِلُ	تَقَابِل
5	يَتَقَابِلُ	تَقَابِل

I hope that this very brief introduction to ابواب الافعال will be a good starting point for further learning of this vast field of صرف . Insha Allah, I will write more about this topic once we go through it in the course.

هفت اقسام - Categories of Irregular Verbs - Sarf

We have already [seen](#) how variations in verb patterns in the Arabic Language can take place due to 6 reasons, 3 of which deal with a difference in the number of base letters and the vowel pattern of the verb. In this post I will give a listing of the other 3 reasons with an example of each, Insha Allah.

These 3 are related to irregularities i.e the presence of certain letters within the verb. Following is a list of these irregularities :

- The presence of a همزة
- The presence of a weak letter i.e. a واو or a ياء
- The last two base-letters being the same letter i.e. a doubled letter (حرف مشدد)

Based on the presence or absence of one of these reasons the scholars of *Sarf* have divided the Arabic

verbs in 7 categories, or to give the Persian term for it, in هفت اقسام

Type name	Characteristic	Example
صحيح	No weak letters;no duplication of letters	نَصَرَ , كَرُمَ
مهموز	أ anywhere in the base verb	قرأ , سأل , أكل
مثال	واو or ياء at the front	وَعَدَ , يَسُرُ
أجواف	واو or ياء at the ع position	قَوْلَ , بَيْعَ
ناقص	واو or ياء at the ل position	رَمَى , دَعَا
لَيف	Two weak letters in the verbs	وَقَى , طَوَى
مُضَاعَف	Second and third letter same	مَرَّ , فَرَّ

Category 3, 4, 5, and 6 all involve a واو or a ياء and verbs falling under these categories are collectively called معتل .

This brief introduction is a prelude to the vast part of *Sarf* which deals with irregularities in Arabic verbs. I will, Insha Allah, post more detail about each of these categories in the near future.

Sarf - The Irregular Verb - أَجَوَف

In the [last](#) post we learned about the 7 categories into which Arabic verbs can be grouped and then we saw how introduction of weak letters can cause verbs to become irregular i.e. cause their conjugations to differ from the normal conjugations of regular verbs. Now we will, Insha Allah, start going into details of each of the verb categories which deal with irregular verbs. Our first post deals with أَجَوَف which, as you may recall, is a verb having واو or ياء at the ع position.

أَجَوَف verbs in Arabic Language come from either one of the 3 *baabs*: ضَرَبَ, نَصَرَ, or سَمِعَ .

Thus , قَالَ comes from the نَصَرَ *baab*, بَاعَ comes from ضَرَبَ *baab*, and خَافَ comes from سَمِعَ *baab*. The very first thing when dealing with irregular verbs is to find the *actual* base letters in it. Remember, irregular verbs are called irregular since one or more of their base letters have either changed to some other letter or have dropped altogether due, mainly, to pronunciation issues. We will now see how we can find the base letters in أَجَوَف verbs and during this exercise we will come up with a rule to form irregular verbs in this category starting from their base letter.

The base letter in an irregular verb can be found by:

1. Looking at nouns formed from these verbs
2. Looking at the مُضَارِع of the irregular verb

Exposure to Arabic Language leads us to the fact that the 3 nouns formed from ضَرَبَ and قَالَ, and

بَاعَ are قول(a saying), بيع(a transaction or a sale), and خوف(fear), respectively. Also, as we will learn

shortly, the مضارع of the three verbs also contain واو

in its middle. Thus, we can now derive the original verbs using this fact and the knowledge of *baab* from which each verb comes.

Original Form	Final Form
قَوْلَ	قَالَ
بَيْعَ	بَاعَ
خَوْفَ	خَافَ

Now we are ready to state our rule for dealing with active voice of the ماضى of أَجَوَفَ .

Simple Change to Alif rule (Active ماضى) :

Whenever there is a مَفْتُوح weak letter i.e. a واو or a ياء preceded by a

the واو or ياء to alif.

As you can see that this rule completely covers the conjugation given in the table above.

Now I will list the ماضى table for قَالَ which will throw up some more light on the treatment of أَجَوَفَ

قَالَ	He said
قَالَا	They (two males) said
قَالُوا	They (more than two males)said
قَالَتْ	She said
قَالَتَا	They (two females) said
قَالْنَّ	They (more than two females)said

قُلْتُ	You (male) said
قُلْتُمَا	You (two males) said
قُلْتُمْ	You (more than 2 males) said
قُلْتَ	You (female) said
قُلْتُمَا	You(2 females) said
قُلْتُنَّ	You(more than 2 females) said
قُلْتُ	I said
قُلْنَا	We said

Note the loss of *alif* from 6th conjugation onwards. Also, note the change from *fatha* to *dhamma*. The *alif* is dropped because it is not easy to pronounce an *alif* followed by a سَاكِن letter because of the introduction of an unnecessary مَد. The *dhamma* is introduced as a trace for the fact that it was a واو which dropped from the verb. Similarly for بَيَعَ the 6th conjugation would be بَيْعَتْ , with the first letter having a *kasra* (and onwards to the last conjugation) signifying that the dropped letter was a ياء .

For خَافَ , however, this simple rule does not apply in totality. The 6th conjugation here is خِيفَنْ rather than خُفَنْ , which one would expect. This is explained by the fact that in the case of خِيفَنْ the *kasra* signifies that the verb is مَكْسُورُ الْعَيْنِ (has a *kasra* on the ع position) because خَافَ originates from the سَمِعَ baab, therefore its middle letter has to have a *kasra* on it. In this case we do get a hint as to which letter was dropped.

To deal with the passive voice we recognize that the following are the starting points for the above

mentioned 3 verbs:

Original Form	Final Form
قُولَ	قِيلَ
بُيعَ	بِيعَ
خُوفَ	خِيفَ

Using the above table we can state the following rule for the passive ماضى of the أجوف type:

Whenever the ع position of a passive ماضى is a واو or ياء remove the vowel from the letter before it and transfer the kasra to this letter. Now, if the ع position is a واو change it to a ياء in accordance with the ميزان rule, which states that any واو which is سَاكِن and is preceded by a kasra will change to ياء

Note: 6th conjugation onwards the conjugations are same for both active and passive voice for the أجوف type

The مُضارع for the أجوف type:

These come from the صحيح counterparts of the corresponding verb which means that the originals will rhyme with the corresponding baabs. The following table list the مُضارع for the أجوف.

باب	أجوف for the مُضارع
يَنْصُرُ	يَقُولُ
يَضْرِبُ	يَبِيعُ
يَسْمَعُ	يَخُوفُ

As is the case with the ماضى of the أجوف , changes occur in the final forms of these verbs due to

presence of weak letters. These changes are given below:

Original Form	Final Form
يَقُولُ	يَقُولُ
يَبِيعُ	يَبِيعُ
يَخُوفُ	يَخَافُ

These changes are governed by the following rule:

Whenever there is a مُتَحَرِّك weak letter i.e. a واو or a ياء preceded by a سُكُون , transfer the vowel from the weak letter to the letter before it. Now, if vowel being transferred is a fatha then change this letter to an alif.

This rule can conveniently be called:

Transfer the vowel - in case of fatha change to alif Rule

Below, I give the full conjugations for the مُضَارِع for the أَجَوَف using يَقُولُ as an example:

يَقُولُ	He says
يَقُولَانِ	They (two males) say
يَقُولُونَ	They (more than two males) say
تَقُولُ	She says
تَقُولَانِ	They (two females) say
يَقُلْنَ	They (more than two females) say
تَقُولُ	You (male) say
تَقُولَانِ	You (two males) say
تَقُولُونَ	You (more than 2 males) say

تَقُولِينَ	You (female) say
تَقُولَانِ	You(2 females) say
تَقُولْنَ	You(more than 2 females) say
أَقُولُ	I say
نَقُولُ	We say

Hopefully this brief introduction to أَجَوَفَ will be a good starting point for understanding irregularities in Arabic verbs, Insha Allah.

Sarf - The Irregular Verb - ناقص - Part 1

Disclaimer: This post is due to a major contribution from Humairah (blogging [here](#)). Any mistakes, of course, are mine.

As we have already [learned](#), ناقص verb is one which has و or ى at its لام position. For the purpose of

illustration we will take three examples of a ناقص verb: دَعَا (he called), which comes from

رَمَى (he threw), which comes from ضَرَبَ (he was pleased), which

comes from سَمِعَ (he was pleased), which

comes from ناقص verb.

ماضي of ناقص:

Below, I will list the ماضي conjugations for both دَعَا and رَمَى. Note that the تَعْلِيل only occurs in the

first 5 conjugations of both these verbs. I will Insha Allah also explain why the تَعْلِيل occurs in each

case. We will deal with رَضِيَ separately later in this post, Insha Allah.

1	دَعَا	رَمَى
2	دَعَاوَا	رَمَيَا
3	دَعَاوُا	رَمَوْا
4	دَعَتْ	رَمَتْ
5	دَعَتَا	رَمَتَا
6	دَعَوْنَ	رَمَيْنَ

7	رَمَيْتَ	دَعَوْتَ
8	رَمَيْتُمَا	دَعَوْتُمَا
9	رَمَيْتُمْ	دَعَوْتُمْ
10	رَمَيْتَ	دَعَوْتَ
11	رَمَيْتُمَا	دَعَوْتُمَا
12	رَمَيْتُنَّ	دَعَوْتُنَّ
13	رَمَيْتُ	دَعَوْتُ
14	رَمَيْنَا	دَعَوْنَا

In the Arabic Language certain pronunciation issues arise when weak letters are preceded by

inappropriate vowels. For example, it is difficult to pronounce a و which is مُتَحَرِّكٌ and is preceded

by a ضَمَّة or a ي which is مُتَحَرِّكٌ and is preceded by a فَتْحَة. In such cases we implement

rules which change these weak letters to other, pronounceable, letters coupled with a shift in the vowel

itself from one letter to another. Thus, for تَعْلِيلٌ to occur the و or ي need to be مُتَحَرِّكٌ and need

to be preceded by inappropriate vowels.

On the other hand, a و which is سَاكِنٌ and is preceded by a ضَمَّة is very normal; similarly a ي

which is سَاكِنٌ and is preceded by a كَسْرَة is very normal. Moreover, a و or ي preceded by a

فَتْحَة is also considered normal for pronunciation. Now, if you note that in the above table there is no

تَعْلِيلٌ from the 6th conjugation downwards because in there the و or ي is سَاكِنٌ and is preceded by

a normal vowel i.e. a فَتْحَة.

First conjugation: [Recall](#) that whenever a و or ي is preceded by a letter with a فَتْحَة on it the و or ي is

changed to ا; thus, the first conjugation was actually دَعَوَ which changed into دَعَا due to the simple change to *alif* rule. The same is true for رَمَى which was initially رَمَى

Second conjugation: This should actually be دَعَوَا rhyming with فَعَلَا . However, the simple change to *alif* rule will cause it to become دَعَا which is difficult to pronounce and thus the final *alif* will drop leaving us with دَعَا . Note that this is exactly the same as the first conjugation so there is actually no تَعْلِيل allowed here. Thus the final form remains دَعَوَا

Third conjugation: Rhyming with فَعَلُوا this should be دَعَوُوا . The first و changes to ا due to the simple change to *alif* rule, leaving us with دَعَاوَا . This form, however, has two سَاكِن letters coming together in it therefore we drop the first ا leaving us with دَعَوَا

Fourth Conjugation: This was originally دَعَوْتُ rhyming with فَعَلْتُ . The و changed to ا causing it to become دَعَاْتُ . Because of the gathering of سَاكِن letters the ا is dropped leaving us with دَعْتُ

Fifth Conjugation: This was originally دَعَوْتَا rhyming with فَعَلْتَا . The و changed to ا giving us دَعَاْتَا . It is important to note here that in this last form the ت is actually سَاكِن but has to carry a فَتْحَة because of the final ا which is the pronoun of duality. Thus the ا in the middle will drop

because of gathering of two ساكِن letters leaving us with دَعَتَا

All the above rules can be equally applied to the first five conjugation of the رَمَى table.

As for رَضِيَ the only تَعْلِيل is in the 3rd conjugation, all other rhyming with the

corresponding conjugations of سَمِعَ

1	رَضِيَ
2	رَضِيََا
3	رَضُوا
4	رَضِيتُ
5	رَضِيتَا
6	رَضِينَا
7	رَضِيتَ
8	رَضِيتُمَا
9	رَضِيتُمْ
10	رَضِيتَ
11	رَضِيتُمَا
12	رَضِيتُنَّ
13	رَضِيتُ
14	رَضِينَا

First conjugation: It was actually رَضُوا but changed its form due a rule which is called the *edge rule*.

It states that “any كَسْرَة position (i.e. occurring at the edge of a word) preceded by a

change to ي “ . This rule deals with the concept of ‘ small تَعْلِيل ‘ whereby one letter changes to

another but the form of the verb is not disfigured: رَضِيَ still rhymes with سَمِعَ .

Note: this 'small تَعْلِيل' happens in all 14 conjugations for رَضِيَ

Third conjugation: The 3rd conjugation was originally رَضِيُوا (rhyming with سَمِعُوا) which is

hard for pronunciation since the ي is preceded by a ضَمَّة . Moreover, this ي here is then followed by

a و which makes it even harder on the tongue. In this case, the ضَمَّة moved from ي to ض, which lost

it كَسْرَة . The ي is then dropped because it is left with a و which is سَاكِن . The و cannot be

dropped since it is a pronoun (denoting 'they, group of males').

This concludes our discussion of introducing the ماضى for the نَاقِص verb. The next post, Insha Allah,

will deal with the مُضَارِع of the نَاقِص verb.

Sarf - The Irregular Verb - ناقص - Part 2

Disclaimer: This post is due to a major contribution from Humairah (blogging [here](#)). Any mistakes, of course, are mine.

We have already [discussed](#) the ماضى of the ناقص verb. In this post, Insha Allah, I will discuss the

تعليل patterns for the same and we will see how some conjugations undergo

صحیح counterparts. In the مضارع of the ناقص verb, 6 conjugations do not have تعليل since they rhyme with their

counterparts. These are conjugations number 2,5,6,8,11, and 12 i.e. the 4 duals and the 2 plural

feminines. For example, the set of these 6 conjugations from the يرمى table will rhyme with

يسمع whereas the set of these 6 conjugations in the يرضى table will rhyme with يضرب.

Below, I will give the complete listing of the مضارع for 3 ناقص verbs:

1	يَدْعُوْ	يَرْمِيْ	يَرْضَى
2	يَدْعُوَانِ	يَرْمِيَانِ	يَرْضَيَانِ
3	يَدْعُوْنَ	يَرْمُوْنَ	يَرْضَوْنَ
4	تَدْعُوْ	تَرْمِيْ	تَرْضَى
5	تَدْعُوَانِ	تَرْمِيَانِ	تَرْضَيَانِ
6	يَدْعُوْنَ	يَرْمِيْنَ	يَرْضَيْنِ
7	تَدْعُوْ	تَرْمِيْ	تَرْضَى
8	تَدْعُوَانِ	تَرْمِيَانِ	تَرْضَيَانِ
9	تَدْعُوْنَ	تَرْمُوْنَ	تَرْضَوْنَ
10	تَدْعِيْنَ	تَرْمِيْنَ	تَرْضَيْنِ

11	تَدْعُوَانِ	تَرْمِيَانِ	تَرْضَيَانِ
12	تَدْعُونِ	تَرْمِينِ	تَرْضَيْنِ
13	أَدْعُوْ	أَرْمِيْ	أَرْضِيْ
14	نَدْعُوْ	نَرْمِيْ	نَرْضِيْ

Only the 5 singulars (1,4,7,13,14) and 3,9, and 10 have تَعْلِيل in them. Note that we include conjugation 14 in the singular group since it *looks like* a singular

If you remember, the [edge rule](#) for a نَاقِص verb states that “any لام position و (i.e. occurring at the edge of a word) preceded by a كَسْرَة will change to ي”. However, look at the cases of يَرْضَيَانِ or يَرْضَيْنِ or تَرْضَيَانِ or تَرْضَيْنِ. They all have و at the لام position since we know that the base letters in the يَرْضِي table are ر ض and و. Thus the first example should have been يَرْضُوَانِ because the و is *not* preceded by a كَسْرَة. However, it is changing to a ي. On top of this, we have also stated that there is no تَعْلِيل in this conjugation. To address this anomaly we say that since the final form of the verb is still rhyming with its صحيح counter part i.e. يَفْعَلَانِ, therefore there has only been a change of a letter rather than a full blown تَعْلِيل. To explain the change of the letter (i.e. و to ي) we state a rule which deals with a و or ي occurring beyond the third position in a نَاقِص verb. This rule can be named “**Fourth position or beyond rule**” and states that:

If a و comes in the fourth position or later in a word and it is not preceded by a ضَمَّة or a سَاكِن, it changes into a ي.

Having noted this aspect, we now move on to deal with those conjugations which have full تَعْلِيل in them.

First conjugation : In the case of يَدْعُوْ it was actually يَدْعُوْ rhyming with يَنْصُرُ . The final ضَمَّة was awkward on و and was dropped. In the case of يَرْمِيْ this was actually يَرْمِيْ . Again, the ضَمَّة was dropped since it was awkward on the ي . For the case of يَرْضَى the original was يَرْضَوُ . The و is at the fourth position so change it to ي according to the “Fourth position or beyond rule”. This leave us with يَرْضَى which has a ي which is مُتَحَرِّك and is preceded by a فَتْحَة so this is changed to ا according to the [Simple Change to Alif rule](#) , giving us يَرْضَى

Third Conjugation: Here يَدْعُوْنَ was originally يَدْعُوْنَ . The ضَمَّة on the و was dropped which leaves us with two و which are سَاكِن . Thus, one of these و is dropped giving us يَدْعُوْنَ

The above process can actually be encompassed in a two step rule which states that: “Whenever there is a لام position و or ي preceded by a ضَمَّة or a كَسْرَة , make the و or the ي as سَاكِن . Now, if the و or ي is preceded by an appropriate short vowel and followed by an appropriate long vowel (see [here](#) for this discussion) then drop this و or ي.” This rule also takes care of the 9th conjugation of يَدْعُوْ as well as the 10th conjugation of يَرْمِيْ .

For the يَرْضَى table, the third conjugation was originally يَرْضَوْنَ rhyming with يَسْمَعُونَ .

The و was changed (according to the Fourth position rule) to ی since it is preceded by a فَتْحَة giving us يَرْضَيُونُ. Now we have a ی which is مُتَحَرِّكٌ and is preceded by a فَتْحَة so we change it to an ا using the [Simple Change to Alif rule](#) , the introduction of which results in gathering of two ساکن letters. Thus, the ا is dropped, leaving us with يَرْضَوْنَ

10th Conjugation : The starting point for this conjugation was تَنْصُرِينَ rhyming with تَدْعُوْنَ

The كَسْرَة is inappropriate before the و so the كَسْرَة was moved to the letter before it. This resulted in gathering of two ساکن letters. The و was dropped, leaving us with تَدْعِيْنَ. This transformation is governed by the following general rule: “If a و is preceded by a ضَمَّة and followed by a ی , the preceding letter is made ساکن and the vowel on و is transferred to the preceding letter. Then the و changes into a ی and falls off due to gathering to two ساکن letters”

In the case of تَرْمِيْنَ this was originally تَرْمِيْنُ rhyming with تَضْرِبُنْ. The كَسْرَة was inappropriate on the ی so the كَسْرَة was dropped, leaving us with two ساکن letters. Thus, one of the ی is dropped giving us تَرْمِيْنَ.

The 10th conjugation in the يَرْضَى table was originally تَرْضَوْنَ rhyming with تَسْمَعِيْنَ.

The و is changed to ی according to the Fourth position or beyond rule. This leaves us with

تَرْضَيْنَ. Again, one of the ى is dropped due to the gathering of two سَاكِن letters giving us

تَرْضَيْنَ

Almost of these rules can also be applied when constructing the passive conjugations for the مُضَارِع

of the نَاقِص verb. In some future post I will Insha Allah try to list all the rules governing تَعْلِيل. Until

then, hopefully, this introduction will come in handy for the students of Classical Arabic.

Sarf - The rules for تَعْلِيل - A summary of أجوف and ناقص

We already know that there are three letters in the Arabic alphabet which are called حُرُوفٌ عِلَّتْ (or the *weak* letters), namely و and ا and ي. The presence of these letters within the base letters of a verb will cause certain changes to occur which can change the final form of the verb. In this post, Insha Allah, I will list down the rules which deal with تَعْلِيل occurring at the لام position and the ع position of the verb. Most of these rules have already been encountered when we discussed the أجوف and the ناقص verb (discussed [here](#) and [here](#)). Since there are quite a few of these rules, and because we will see many of them in future صَرْف discussions, therefore it is beneficial to list these at one place for reference purposes.

Rules for أجوف:

1. Simple Change to Alif rule: Whenever there is a مُتَحَرِّكٌ weak letter i.e. a واو or a ي preceded by a مَفْتُوح letter, change the واو or ي to ا. See [here](#) for examples of this rule
2. The مِيزَانٌ rule: Any واو which is سَاكِنٌ and is preceded by a كَسْرَةٌ will change to ي. See [here](#) for examples of this rule
3. Whenever the ع position of a passive ماضى is a واو or ي remove the vowel from the letter before it and transfer the كَسْرَةٌ to this letter. See [here](#) for examples of this rule

4. Whenever there is a مُتَحَرِّك weak letter i.e. a واو or a ي preceded by a سَكُون , transfer the vowel from the weak letter to the letter before it. Now, if the vowel being transferred is a فَتْحَة then change this letter to an ١. See [here](#) for examples of this rule

Rules for نَاقِص:

1. The Edge Rule: It states that “any لام position و (i.e. occurring at the *edge* of a word) preceded by a كَسْرَة will change to ى”. This is depicted by the first ماضى conjugation of رَضِيَ which was originally رَضِو. See [here](#) for examples of this rule
2. Fourth Position or Beyond Rule: If a و comes in the fourth position or later in a word and it is not preceded by a ضَمَّة or a سَاكِن, it changes into a ى. See [here](#) for examples of this rule
3. Whenever there is a لام position و or ى preceded by a ضَمَّة or a كَسْرَة, make the و or the ى as سَاكِن. Now, if the و or ى is preceded by an appropriate short vowel and followed by an appropriate long vowel (see [here](#) for this discussion) then drop this و or ى. The change of يَدْعُوْنَ to يَدْعُونَ is handled by this rule
4. If there is a و or ١ or ي at the end of a verb then they are dropped in case of جَزَم. For example, لَمْ يَدْعُوْ which was originally لَمْ يَدْعُ or لَمْ يَرْمِ which was originally لَمْ يَرْمِ

Hopefully this list will come in handy for the students of صَرَف when dealing with أَجَوَف and نَاقِص

verb. Insha Allah, in the future, I will post about other هفت اقسام and their governing rules as well.

**This book is the combined version of the lecture notes
available on:**

<http://sheepoo.wordpress.com/pdf-files/>